Reified Life

Speculative Capital and the Ahuman Condition

J. Paul Narkunas

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Reified Life

INTRODUCTION

Humanisms, Posthumanisms, and Their Discontents

On May 6, 2010, the New York Stock Exchange tumbled one thousand points over several minutes due to an algorithmic-driven buying and selling spree, when high-speed artificial intelligence bots created an autonomous reality far beyond their programming. Dubbed the "flash crash" in the U.S. media, this event signaled to the world the automation of global stock markets, the pervasiveness of high-frequency trading in the age of financial derivatives, and new frontiers of economic risk in the digital age. Computer programmers and quantum physicists had created automated forms of intelligence (programming robots) that replaced human financial traders, resulting in what *Wall Street Journal* writer Scott Patterson calls the "algo wars." The automated high-frequency trading systems within over seventy different online exchanges operate by exercising calibrated semiautonomous judgment through the virtual buying of stocks and selling them nanoseconds later for a profit. These fast-moving algorithms, which were programmed for opportunistic traders at small firms, detect the intention of institutional investors (that is, pension funds or large investment houses such as Fidelity or Vanguard) to buy or sell large orders of investments, and purchase them beforehand. This raises the stock, bond, or asset price in the interim between

the institutional investors' signaling of intention to buy and the time it takes to process the actual order—which is itself done through other, slower automated systems. Due to the celerity of the operations, institutional investors pay a now-higher price for the investment due to the algorithms' simultaneous buying and selling. These changes defy human sensibility and only register belatedly through numerical value fluctuations. The algorithmic bots generate profits by monetizing pre-cognizant intention, skimming the difference between intention and action, and accumulating vast sums of money due to the size of the orders, all in the span of nanoseconds.

Most of these transactions, which utilize a machinic form of arbitrage monetizing the price difference between different markets, are speculative virtual hedges without any actual transfer of money between agents in the material world. As a result, algorithmic bots are programmed to generate fake orders, raising and lowering prices instantaneously in an automated form of speculative financial capitalism. They trigger other algorithms to buy or sell depending on their programmed intention to seek new avenues of profit (hunter-seeker bots) or manage risk from such algorithms. This cascading process creates seemingly endless feedback loops of bots performing their functions, forcing more and more human programmers to generate more and more algorithms that open and complicate the financial system through their interaction. The result is an algorithmic war of all against all. Indeed, as Patterson wrote,

> Insiders were slowly realizing that the push-button turbo-trading market in which algos battled algos inside massive data centers and dark pools at speeds measured in billionths of a second had a fatal flaw. The hunter-seeker Bots that controlled trading had sensors designed to detect rapid, volatile swings in prices. When the swings passed a certain threshold—say, a downturn of 5 percent in five minutes—the algorithms would instantly sell, shut down, and wait for the market to stabilize. The trouble was that when a large number of algorithms sold and shut down, the market became *more* volatile, triggering *more* selling.[1]

The flash crash was thereby the effect of a cascade of triggers, events, and networks of connected relations whose interactions transformed the systems' phases to function differently from their programming and protocols. These interconnected processes exemplify self-reflexive autopoietic systems that open and exceed their initial protocols through dynamic "intra-actions," in Karen Barad's terminology,[2] in this instance generating economic crises. On a more basic level, however, virtual symbolic trades,

also known as financial engineering, produce effects on the real economy of goods and services.[3] The flash crash showed the limits of machinic and human intentionality, as vast sums of wealth melted into thin air, with concrete material effects for banks, corporations, equity firms, pension funds, asset management firms, hedge funds, mutual funds, and, due to more and more pension funds' involvement in high-risk financial markets, countless individuals. In this configuration, human control over machines is not part of the program, as it were, for these technologies are designed to eschew human cognitive mapping of current realities. Financial firms use this invisibility from the human mind as a tool for greater monetization.

Reified Life: Speculative Capital and the Ahuman Condition diagnoses and critiques these two major autopoietic systems embodied by high-frequency trading: the human and its technological, organic, and ontological others that act without humans. Both the human and its others self-organize, while creating functional entanglements of processes and relations between entities that generate forms of life. I foreground in this book how these emergent processes are directed by the intersections of technological transformations and neoliberal economic practices that actually modulate ontology, the stuff of our present realities. They do so by reifying life as an economic object for financial speculation. Financial capital, the main engine of neoliberalist speculative processes, captures life (human and otherwise) and reconfigures it as a medium of exchange, as a speculative site for capital formation and monetization. Félix Guattari describes this transformation as the moment when capitalism becomes semiotic through the digital and financial reorganization of life. This semiocapitalism generates meaning and forms of life as media of exchange, as money, and is revealed most clearly when the intensification of financial activities, known as financialization, comes to dominate the economy, superceding the production of commodities.[4] Finance acts through speculative instruments that leverage debt and hedge the possibilities of money. My focus in *Reified Life* is how such semiocapitalist processes capture and circulate elements of life as fungible objects for the marketplace. These objects include data sets, weather events, human organs, cells, human energy (labor), eyeballs on web pages (affective labor), language, culture, narrative, and thought itself, as well as more commonsense notions of commodities and such financial instruments as derivatives. Life is transformed in the process, and so are normative concepts of the human—the legal, the cultural, and the thinking of human subjectivity. This book plots the economic reconfiguration of the human understanding of subjectivity and ontology, and how we think of agency, resistance, institutions, and politics. My goal is to reorient

the human as a problem to be interrogated and as a process that can be mobilized for interventions, rather than weighting it as an object of knowledge. I therefore argue that the human has never been a simple object, despite the repeated claims of humanisms and posthumanisms.

The high-frequency trading (HFT) scenario with which I opened the discussion demonstrates, furthermore, that algorithmic programming is not only a technology for exercising trades, but also a technique of power—standardizing processes so that the market and all its agents, human and nonhuman, are automated, to be disrupted only by unthought microdisturbances of positive feedback that exceed the algorithms' programming. HFT exemplifies how process-oriented digital technologies such as the internet function, counterintuitively, by standardizing human practices and conducting human affect and attention through what Alexander Galloway calls "protocological control"—decentralized networks of flexible control that can accommodate massive contingency while also generating systems of distributed management.[5] Distributed networks may only analogically delineate the complexity of an emergent human and technological amalgamation. The historical and philosophical separation between humans and animals after Aristotle and Descartes, and/or between humans and machines, assumed that humans are exceptional due to their ability to reason with Cartesian intentionality. Critics in the humanities and posthumanities, animal studies scholars, ecologists, and philosophers of science have levied important critiques of these arrogant claims, to document the anthropocentric conceit.[6] Yet as the algorithmic thinking of HFT shows, as do predictive analytics more generally, Cartesian intentionality is now outsourced to informatic machines that can mimic and actually predict human intention faster and more precisely than *homo sapiens sapiens* because of the sheer magnitude of data they can process quickly.[7]

Humanism's *modus operandi* was to enfigure the human being as the central creator of the world in its own image, and it relied on the synergy of transcendent and immanent forces for this centrality. However, economic and technological forces of decentralization have usurped the human's capacity for maintaining the organizing principles of modernity, including the centrality of the species and organism itself. With the attributes of the sovereign subject (subjectivism, if you will) outsourced to machinic processes and the data that embodies them, the subject becomes merely one conduit in an interconnected network of algorithms and protocols whose singular actions converge and create a new system of value-production. Such emergent relationships frequently defy human comprehension, and instead are represented analogically through economic data, which shep-

herds life as abstract surplus value, units for circulation and monetization. In the process, financialization and monetization render life as the culmination of mathematical formulae, spread sheets, systems analysis, or risk models. This reorganization of life as data marks the point at which economic forces exercise power by underwriting and policing the very realm of the sensible and possible, by creating subjectivities and rendering life into statistical objects. Given these techniques of rendering life, including the species itself, into objects, where is the domineering human? Inchoate, flexible manifestations of subjectivity demand that we complicate human-machine relationships as mutually co-implicating and transforming material realities at the moment of their simultaneous convergence and production.[8]

Reified Life foregrounds the instrumentalization of life by capital to document not only the rendering of humans into tools and things, but the humanizing of tools and processes such as data analysis into forms of agency that are perceived as more truthful, efficient, and effective than humans. I will diagnose and trace in this book how the nonhuman forces of money, stock markets, and their tools (derivatives, equities, mutual funds, futures, annuities) are self-generating open systems that use prerepresentational data sets and algorithms to "operationalize"—to borrow the machinic language of the market—human ontology in order to control it. Operationalizing the human also radically reorganizes the conceptual limits of human existence, subjectivity, and forms of power,[9] while reducing human subjectivity to a transactional relationship—to social capital, or to a value-producing being, or to an asset. As political economist Thomas Piketty describes in *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*, his magnum opus on wealth inequality, the human becomes a product delineated hierarchically through its economic efficacy. What does it mean to be a human worker when most wealth now arises through the interplay of financial assets and revaluation of real estate, rather than via human labor?[10] Piketty maps historically how economic inequality is institutionalized and wealth only ever redistributed in times of war, indicating that the current structural inequality between the wealthy and the majority of the world's population produces a reserve army of expendable humans. This is nothing new. Such inequality has persisted throughout human history, but I will highlight a historical shift in human subjectivity from labor to assets, and mark how human capital straddles these two formations. *Reified Life* probes the following question: If the human subject is incidental to this increasingly prominent asset-centered generation of value, how is human ontology affected by the economic system, specifically, one in which humans function more like products, some useful, some not, than like consumers

and producers of commodities? For a concrete example, let us consider labor's reorganization in light of digital technologies, namely the shift from the use of labor in the production of tangible goods and services in the real economy to a subsidiary effect of the human's affective labor when humans view websites, perform searches, or interface with an application, when human attention produces trackable, fungible data. The human in this configuration need not actually be compensated, for it is the data stream that has value. This is how such companies as Amazon, Google, Facebook, and Microsoft can operate at a loss with regard to the material items that they sell or the platforms that they offer for free, but still have immense speculative value for the data they accumulate and hoard. As I will discuss at length below, human viewing habits and patterns are themselves useful products (data) that can be monetized, while little use may be found for the biological entity with its quivering intentional subjectivity that generates the data. It is not mere chance that job growth since the 2007–2008 financial crisis has been anemic. Some kinds of growth did occur; between 2008 and 2014, the number of people in the United States living in poverty increased by 11 percent.[11] Indeed, the 2008 economic crisis has been less a challenge to neoliberal and financial capital—the Dow Jones is higher at the time of writing than ever before—than a justification for reorganizing the world on a generalized austerity model, *res publica* outsourced and downsized. Consequently, I argue in *Reified Life* that the human as concept and species has already been taken off its anthropocentric pedestal amid bioengineering, environmental catastrophe, and intelligent technologies that digitize and outsource human memory and creative production,[12] while neoliberal economies of scale enable the supplanting of humans in the workplace. To think these transformations of the human, I map and critique dramatic changes to the humanist organization of knowledge in thinking subjectivity, culture, human rights and humanitarian law, and education. (*Imprimis*: If humans are incidental, why waste good money on the humanities?) In all of these aforementioned realms, humans are secondary to other complex forces of capture, such as virtual price differentials, cost-benefit analyses, outcomes assessment, and opinion polls that create subjectivities based on momentary whims of organized and often ideologically defined data. The statistical reorganization of life calls for new thinking on what types of agency are created adjacently to subjects and objects that could resist these inchoate formations. *Reified Life* advances a speculative defense of the human as indeed one more element among many, but one that can nevertheless resist the nonhuman and self-organizing forces of neoliberal and financial capitalism that produce our reality.

Yet *Reified Life* is not a defense of humanism or the humanist intentional subject of phenomenology. The failures of European humanism have been made patently clear by materialist feminists, by scholars devoted to gender studies and critical race studies, and by critics of neocolonialism, among others. As I have noted, the humanist subject with its quivering dignity, consciousness, and faith in critical reflection ain't what it used to be. *While the humanist organization of knowledge drove the secular project of Enlightenment and coincided with the formation of the modern state, the two are not correlative. Transformations in the modern state have altered the conceptual status of the human. As a result, thinking through the human's reorganization by market forces is the most imperative political question of the twenty-first century*. The human should not be conflated with the failures of humanism or anthropocentrism. *Reified Life* maps how colonizations of the human by capital and technology have had dramatic effects, unmooring the human as an object of knowledge and reflection. I go beyond the genealogies of unthought anthropocentrism offered by object-oriented ontology and the posthumanities to theorize the dangerous social implications of a posthuman future, in which human agency is secondary to algorithmic processes, digital protocols, speculative financial instruments, and nonhuman market and technological forces.

I return, heretically, to humanist thinkers, as well as to antihumanist poststructuralists who have seemed preoccupied with the human throughout their work despite their collective rejection of the Sartrean humanism that guided the French intellectual scene from the 1950s to the 1970s. In light of the intensifying instrumentalization of knowledge, the humanist method of tracing the interconnections of disparate secular and historical knowledges to engage the linkages of seemingly disparate forces does provide tools for thinking about the complexity of human life. Consequently, I bring together the disparate fields of political economy, biotechnology, genetic engineering, critical legal studies, and literary study to map their historical and material connections. Why? Because life operates that way. I propose that what are often called "speculative fictions" can provide important critical and ethical responses to rapacious speculative capital in ways that may exceed current human conceptual understanding, including the understanding provided by speculative realism. Speculative fictions can counterintuitively provide the raw material for emergent political-ethical projects. How? They envision alternative practices of life that I call *ahuman*—indeterminate acts, processes, and affects of freedom that are not immediately coopted by neoliberalism's flexible representational techniques of control and regularization within subjectivity or reified objects.

Moreover, speculative fictions reenergize language and representation by rethinking the materiality of language as an aesthetic affective register that produces modes of existence. Through analyses of the politics of translation and speculative fictions, *Reified Life* conceives the species as a *figurating animal*—not only in the production of art, symbolic systems of languages and mathematics, complex technologies, and scientific development, but also in the creation of emergent politics that struggle with instrumental forces.

Neoliberal Coup d'Etat

Reified Life offers a novel interpretation of the post-anthropocentric turn by linking the diminished centrality of humanism to the waning dominion of nation-states over their populations, the fracturing of cognitive structures of narrative and attention, the effects of financialization in the social field, and the reconfiguration of politics along economic categories of risk management, as effects of the intensification of financial capitalism. Transnational, biotechnological, and corporate forces increasingly affiliate with governments to govern life, while liberal democratic governments in the global North abandon their welfare state and liberalist projects of sovereign citizenship, commonwealth, and common good. Neoliberalism employs the discourse of freedom to incorporate sites of alterity into human capital and to harness humans as leveraged assets. Karl Marx, responding to liberalist economic policies, called these processes the "socializing mission of capital" to surmount and disrupt alternative social existence while consolidating and harnessing social forms that galvanize capital (re)production.[13] Pierre Dardot and Christian Laval update Marx, describing neoliberalism as a normative regime rather than a purely economic one:

> With [neoliberalism], competition and the entrepreneurial model constitute a general mode of government, far exceeding the 'economic sphere' in the habitual sense of the term. And that is precisely what we see everywhere. The requirement of 'competitiveness' has become a general political principle, which governs reforms in all areas, even those furthest removed from commercial confrontations in the world market. It is the clearest manifestation that we are dealing not with a 'creeping commodification,' but with an extension of market rationality to existence in its entirety through the generalization of the enterprise-form.[14]

Neoliberalism operates complexly as a political rationality, a form of flexible governance remaking the world so that all forms of life must now be measured within economic categories. They are aided by the nation-states' governance structures, and by techniques such as the use of "big data" to facilitate the free movement of capital, services, and beings. Nation-states appropriate the language of the market, treating it as coterminous with citizenship, while outsourcing their own functions to market agents who profit from the state's economies of scale. This corporate-state partnership is not a new phenomenon, at least since mercantilism, but the locus of power is shifting from the nation-state to the uber-wealthy (pun intended) of financial speculative capital. As a result, we see nation-states promoting a form of subjectivity that can be characterized less as that of the citizen-soldier than as the becoming of being through economic sensibilities of human capital and risk management, a point I discuss at length in chapter 1 through the idea of what I call *market humans*. As my first four chapters delineate, neoliberalism functions thereby not only as an economic system or political rationality, but as what Raymond Williams has described as *culture*, a way of life or "structure of feeling."[15]

Neoliberalism's and financial capitalism's drive for cornering markets indicates that it would be a mistake to conceive of capital teleologically as aimed solely toward profit, the production of objects or services, or a universe of units, things and objects. Neoliberalism and financial capitalism are not merely the free-market economic system, but complex structuring *actants*, to use Bruno Latour's term.[16] They engage in creating subjectivities (such as market humans) as well as reorganizing nation-states and producing culture. My first two chapters address how culture produces identities that are suffused and circulated as another form of capitalization, and how the capacity for humans to become fungible assets becomes the means to decide what is the life worth living. Later chapters address how neoliberalism constructs ways of being and life that restructure the material world—from environmental destruction to the industrialization of consciousness through education organized around market efficiencies, to the outsourcing of human rights as new mechanisms of governance and humanitarian control. Neoliberalism fosters difference engines along flexible modes of identity, and subject formations as free within the market through ever-more-specified, autonomous forms of existence, for it recognizes forms of existence as potential sites of marketing. Forms of being that go against market formations, however, whether these forms be unions, governmental institutions committed to regulation, or what used to be called

"the dangerous classes" read through racial, ethnic, gendered, or sexual orientation categorizations, become "expendable life." They must plug into the market through economic investment or social mobility—a certain formation of economic skills—or be dispensed with for failing to "innovate" or "adapt" to new social realities.

The very idea of useful life, the instrumentalization of life through its reification, now dominates, because the culture of neoliberalism has become a universal common sense. After a forty-year assertion of neoliberal arguments by Friedrich Hayek and Milton Friedman, Margaret Thatcher's famous declaration that "there is no society," only individuals and families, is normative. Neoliberalism establishes the regime of truth, the modes of value for recognizing viable life forms, and those who are expendable life through economic horizons. This worrying trend even touches hitherto privileged elites from the professional classes (human day traders, tenure-track professors, lawyers) deemed no longer useful human capital.

The first two sections of *Reified Life* chart the human's transformation from humanism's sovereign subject to the precarious agent of financial neoliberalism. I contend that this flexible agent, unmoored from humanist figuration and state incorporation, offers new possibilities for thinking life differently, but also more supple forms of control through open decentralized systems that paradoxically conglomerate. The concept of the self-regulating market that currently dominates U.S. discourse makes governmental regulation anathema; yet this mindset does not impel a generalized retreat of governmental forces, but rather a co-implicated generation of control, a symbiotic, parasitical relationship that is mutually reinforcing. I discuss below how the organs of the state may in fact increasingly expedite their own destruction, as the consensus with regard to austerity as transcendent, formalized through tax codes that privilege the few over the many, demonstrates every day. One axiom I unfold throughout the book is the connection between the concept of humanism and the nation-state. As the sovereignty of nation-states transforms, the fundamental legitimation principle of the regulatory state and its possibilities for creating mechanisms to protect humans loses its critical force. Or tangentially, neoliberalism gains greater force in deciding the epistemic limits of the possible when repugnance toward the human gains greater currency. Hence, I speculate that the rise of posthumanism may be connected to the market's no longer viewing the human as central to its operations, and I document below how this move marks the shift from emphasis on the consumer to financial capital as an end in itself.

Posthumanism and Its Discontents

I began this book with the high-frequency trading (HFT) narrative to highlight the pervasive nonanthropocentric reality of complex machines that generate their own ontological existence. In response to automated trading and increased financial regulation in the aftermath of the 2008 economic crisis, powerful corporate actors, including hedge funds and high net worth individuals, shifted their trading to what have been termed "dark pools of liquidity," private markets and equity funds where trades are hidden from public disclosure. New trading exchanges, some even owned by large, powerful hedge funds such as the Citadel Group, hide investment intention by frustrating the capacity for representation, as a defense against the algo wars. As a result, trades that utilize these dark pools now account for up to 40 percent of current market transactions in the United States. They have reorganized investment strategies, granting greater leveraging power to hedge funds and private equity, and increased the use of unregulated derivatives markets.[17] Although hedge funds were initially designed for short-term risky investments with lucrative returns, more and more institutional investors in the United States, including university endowments and state pension funds, increasingly invest with hedge funds and private equity firms to gain access to dark pools and their promise of high rates of return when the market is moribund.[18] In this constellation, high-frequency trading firms, hedge funds, and equity corporations exercise agency through what physicist and philosopher of science Karen Barad calls "agential realism," whereby matter is conceived dynamically, including objects, things, and beings that emerge through intra-acting and produce a material onto-epistemological reality: "Agency is 'doing' or 'being' in its intra-activity. It is the enactment of iterative changes to particular practices—iterative reconfigurings of topological manifolds of spacetimematter relations—through the dynamics of intra-activity."[19] As a result, agential realism does not privilege humans or nonhumans, and it adumbrates agency outside social constructionist or empirical realist categories. In other words, rather than conceiving ontology as substances hidden by appearances, in Barad's view things and agency do not preexist but emerge into phenomena through their entanglement. Such actions frequently defy representation or the cognitive abilities of humans, such as, for the sake of our argument, the luminous price values of stocks, currencies, or portfolios that cascade across a computer screen to mark evanescent leveraged debt for a transactional hedge.[20] The complexity of these assemblages of debts creates an unstable prerepresentational and presubjective system in which the virtual

economy of financial transactions becomes the real economy of tangible goods and services.[21] For example, the Securities and Exchange Commission at the time of writing had not been able to identify the causes of the flash crash because of the immanent formation of the crisis and the perpetually shifting phases of the system. Due to the complex processes' distribution through a dynamic network that defied representational intelligibility to human agents, the crash exceeded then-current institutional mechanisms of recognition, and thus governance by the SEC. This is by design. The active strategy of hoarding capital in the dark, whether it be dark money in politics, dark financial instruments such as derivatives, or the use of private equity and hedge funds for greater returns through risky economic ventures because they do not need to be transparent as do publicly traded companies, suggests a zealous glee in defying human cognitive mapping.

Given the inhuman, nonhuman, or posthuman forces I have been discussing with HFT and dark pools of liquidity, the post-anthropocentric renaissance in the humanities and critical theory should be poised for dramatic encounters with neoliberalism and financial capitalism. The post-anthropocentric turn has ushered in necessary critiques of the triumphalism of humanism with its universal and gendered subject, foregrounded the limits of human perception for grasping the world, and reimagined the forgotten nonhuman elements—technologies, companion species, things, "hyperobjects"—that co-create the human. Posthumanism, speculative realism, and object-oriented ontology rethink the non-naturalistic organization of the human and highlight how short-term thinking contributes to the generalized catastrophe wrought by the impact of human activity on the world, animals, and the environment. They seem uniquely ready at hand to theorize the consequences of the reification of time, life, and being in modernity by challenging the limits of human mind for thinking complexity in the world. Moreover, these intellectual tendencies share critiques of the retreat into what Quentin Meillasoux called *correlationism*—the view that what the human mind thinks, is what is—that are helpful for struggling with the complex autopoietic systems of neoliberal capital. Meillasoux critiques the correlationist thought of the moderns, "to be is to be a correlate"; instead, "our task . . . consists in trying to understand how thought is able to access the uncorrelated, which is to say, a world capable of subsisting without being given."[22] The subject of knowledge and subjectivism creates a world of exclusively human understanding. Consequently, object-oriented ontologists and other posthumanists have offered trenchant critiques of anthropocentrism and epistemology for failing to exam-

ine how objects withdraw part of their being and do not show their full presence, due to the cognitive limits of representationalism. I share many of their arguments on the dangers of the anthropocentric conceit, including their critique of humanism's hubris in relationship to environmental destruction, and like them I stress the need to think the relationship of beings or objects—human, animal, and mineral—in the formation of the material.

Yet the reflections of object-oriented ontology (or OOO) seem primarily concerned with philosophical and artistic creations, and at the time of this writing its proponents have seldom engaged with how economies and politics affect material ontologies, including capital's long history of rendering humans into objects. Let me elaborate. If a financial derivative and a human life are ontologically equal and ethics is merely an anthropocentric epistemological concern, might not what one adherent of OOO calls a "democracy of objects" create not only "ontological egalitarianism" between objects, but also the philosophical justification to monetize units of human life for economic speculation?[23] Despite their enormous contributions in thinking through nature-cultures (Latour's term) or "real stuff," the proponents of OOO are curiously silent about economic matters due to conceiving them as epistemological or symbolic issues that are subject to all-too-human foibles of representation and human subjectivism.[24] I will further discuss in chapter 3 how emphasizing the ontological flatness of objects, machines, and humans, while metaphysically apt, could be a dangerous depoliticizing gesture in light of the economic instrumentalization of life. Suffice it to say at this juncture that the utter absence of theorizations of power and inequality in the ontological turn may explain why, at the time of writing, the contributions of OOO to critical race theory and to studies of gender, sexuality, and postcolonialism have been virtually nonexistent. Many dispossessed groups may have already affectively lived an ontology whereby their status as objects has been assumed, a point I describe at length in several chapters. These are not merely philosophical concerns, as more and more populations are rendered expendable unless their status as units or objects connects to the streams of capital generation.

My method seeks to avoid disciplinary boundaries, and is guided by the idea that any new materialisms must not abandon the concern of "old materialism" with the historical and with the ways in which political economy affects and generates ontology and has already rendered humans into objects. High-frequency trading, dark pools of liquidity, and agential realism exhibit the dance between old and new materialisms. First, they show how our machines, things, and networks are living nonhuman beings,

which through their intra-action with other agents, human and nonhuman, produce new global material realities. At the same time, these machinic prerepresentational networks rely on physically built infrastructure and energy sources in order to power their existence. As a result, rather than solely focusing on the "new" cognitive capitalism of the information economy, or immaterial labor and what Marx called the "General Intellect," we must think financial capitalism and neoliberalism's autopoietic, self-organizing ontological systems as still grounded by the material limits of the energy and machines on which they operate.[25] For example, the automation of the stock market relies on vast digital networks assembled by virtue of the high-speed internet cables buried underground, as did the flash crash of that market. This realization led one exchange, TradeWorx, to spend millions of dollars developing a dedicated high-speed cable with the straightest direct line between New York and Chicago to avoid disturbances along the distributed network.[26] Human beings drilled into earth to provide the passageways and lay the broadband cables on which these virtual trades travel. This marks what systems theorists Humberto Maturana and Francois Varela call self-reflexive, autopoietic systems as autonomous, dynamic, closed living systems that are nevertheless dependent on resources from their surrounding environment. Self-organizing systems are dependent on the physical and mental structures in which they emerge, including access to energy sources for their existence, whose production and subsequent maintenance open closed systems.[27] Access to energy sources, including such entities as roads, cable lines, human labor, and complex carbohydrates that fuel the body, are as imperative to the ontological existence of these phenomena as are the machinations of conceptualizations, thought, and knowledge for thinking material reality. Consequently, my central concern in this book is how economic functionalities mediate existences that in practice structure time, space, and matter.

Market ontology, or what I call economic ontology—the structuring of organized systems comprised of human and nonhuman actors—shepherds being into all-too-human formations of capital, profit, derivatives, and arbitrage, even when these formations defy the human mind. The economy, by definition, marks the *oikos* (household), one of the earliest means to envision emerging systems of organization; it creates and directs beings, from shit to financial arbitrage, that stick to humans and environments, while producing dynamic immanent realities through the complex interactions of both human and nonhuman agents. Economies, as I demonstrate throughout the book, are social autopoietic systems affected not only by

the networks of relations of consumer objects, but oriented by material limits, such as access to energy, intelligence, connections to environments, and the exercising of power to affect other beings (including legal mechanisms such as regulations). Within economic ontology, all objects (metaphysically speaking) are ontologically equivalent as financial tools for capital's ethical telos of using the elements of life to create profit, shareholder or portfolio value. I ponder whether all ontology is now economic ontology, for all being, not just human being, is read through market instrumentalities. In my view it is a mistake to follow OOO and think of capital and ethics, given their representationality and anthropocentrism, as merely failures of human mind. By focusing on economic ontology, I trace instead how economies create realms of being and how they operate aesthetically to police affect while also exercising political functions, such as the protection of human subjects, that historically have been the purview of nation-states.

My opening HFT example also speaks, consequently, to the aesthetic properties of capitalism, which create new realities and styles of existence that deploy the idea of freedom to instrumentalize existence along economic rationalities, and therefore limit life.[28] HFT is but one digital technology that creates new realities and sensations, including sensations of the Kantian beautiful and the sublime, evoking wonder and dread. Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno warned of capitalism's rationalization of society employing the guiding principles of the Enlightenment (*Aufklarung*), knowledge, freedom, and autonomy, through the aesthetics of the culture industry: "What is decisive today is no longer Puritanism . . . but the necessity inherent in the system, of never releasing its grip on the consumer, not for a moment allowing him or her to suspect that resistance is possible. . . . [I]ndividuals experience themselves through their needs only as eternal consumers, as the culture industry's objects."[29] Horkheimer and Adorno demonstrate that the techniques of reification contain and police aesthetics as a consumer event, which renders humans into the object of capital. While critiquing the extension of the consumption of objects into all facets of life, they also diagnose the epistemological paralysis of the objectification of life, which deploys immanent and preconceptual forms of affect and intuition as flexible tools of control. Amid the residues of Enlightenment, Horkheimer and Adorno demand that we weigh a current nightmare for the living, namely the ways in which reification is a perceptual and sense-making aesthetic mechanism to limit existence, frustrate resistance, and reorient attention to economic ends. Capital employs aesthetics to reduce life to economic categories. However, the aesthetic also helps us think

through life's entombment within instrumental thinking. As a result, throughout this book the aesthetic identifies modes of creation and sensations with the power to affect beings, and therefore must also be thought in its political economic dimensions for creating ways of life, including rendering humans into things, as well as the ability to generate new forms of resistance.

Reified Life speculatively diagnoses how the discourses of humanism and posthumanism counterintuitively objectify what a human can be. Despite the colonialist and gendered legacies of humanism pointed out by Frantz Fanon,[30] humanism still has critical force in the present for mobilizing dispossessed populations to resist intolerable power structures through the simple idea that humans make their own history, even if they do not fully understand what they are making. The literary critic and public intellectual Edward Said described humanism as a form of criticism and critique to mark how little is known about the world, and how it can be changed.[31] Unfortunately, Said's defenses of humanism are often portrayed as stuck in the past, frustrating innovative posthuman thought because of an unexamined orientation toward thinking in chronological terms. This is the very form of thinking that posthumanists and those thrown under the banner of poststructuralism—a term that few of the French intellectuals commonly described as poststructuralists actually embraced—would critique as being too invested in the idea of progress. While the "posts" do help identify epistemological differences or change, they become a distraction for thinking the messy emergence of events, or historical forces, that defined what the "posts" are rejecting in the always-evanescent present. Indeed, after the half century that has passed since Foucault's 1966 announcement at the end of *The Order of Things* "that man would be erased, like a face drawn in sand at the edge of the sea"—his documenting of the human as a recent invention—and Derrida's 1968 declaration of "the ends of man," critiques of anthropocentrism and the problematics of humanism are far from novel. Moreover, they have not yet led to any inchoate antihumanist politics (whatever that would be), due to the persistent legacy of Enlightenment thinking in organizing institutions.[32] In this regard I share Bernard Stiegler's view, in *States of Shock*, of the failures of poststructuralism and post–World War II thought, with the exception of the Frankfurt School, in neglecting to address the totalitarian power of consumerism and the ways in which "economic knowledge has become an automatism without decision."[33] Poststructuralism has provided necessary critiques of humanism, intentional subjectivity, anthropocentrism, technologies, undecideablity, and so forth; it has foregrounded the role of

impersonal forces for producing reality and thinking agency alongside the subject, and has offered new strategies for thought. And yet poststructuralism has engaged in few concrete encounters with the economic advent of reality—this despite the fact that its mechanisms of thought are perhaps best suited to theorizing these emergent processes. I ponder the simple question: In turning to ontology, must we cede epistemology *in toto*, or envision a postepistemological and thereby posthistorical and postinstitutional age, in trying to delineate alternative forms of existence? And does the process of "post" thinking entrench the very forces it claims to critique?

Even if thinkers yearn for postanthropocentrism as thought's redemption, we continue to dwell in a world that copiously develops all-too-human institutions, even if they have fewer and fewer connections to states. Indeed, as I will explore subsequently, the proliferation of nonstatist institutions is one of neoliberalism's most effective strategies, as evidenced by 501(c) nonprofits for lobbying or for crafting ready-made legislation (e.g., American Legal Exchange Council, think tanks), philanthropic organizations, and nongovernmental organizations that affect governing by appropriating statist institutions or the mechanisms of governance. Post-anthropocentrism does not usher in a postinstitutional world, so we need strategies to struggle with the efflorescence of nonstatist governing organizations and institutions that govern protocologically through a distributed network. As a result, I focus in chapters below on how institutions shape subjectivities by reorganizing life along economic categories (economic ontology), on how culture becomes itself a form of marketable human capital, and how human rights and humanitarianism are subject-producing mechanisms that often use economic reasoning to throw more and more lives outside of the human horizon, and thus "free" those lives from the legal protections these mechanisms ostensibly secure. It is my contention that posthumanism also renders human subjectivity into a type of object, and thus reifies life within the very all-too-human categories it seeks to supplant. This raises the obvious question that I wish posthumanists would address more concretely: How can we be "posthuman," or discuss taking the human off its anthropocentric pedestal, rendering it as simply another object, when so many *homo sapiens* have never even been treated as human over the scales of deep time due to colonialism, imperialism, gender, race, and economic inequality, and the technologization and instrumentalization of life by capitalism? And what politics are possible in a post-anthropocentric world, given the emphasis of posthumanism on the autonomy of things and animals on the one hand, and the continued

institutional pervasiveness of Enlightenment and humanist ideas of freedom on the other? I respond to these questions throughout the book with the concept of the ahuman.

Instead of the posthuman, I propose that the human together with the posthuman is the seeming antidote to humanism's triumph of the will because of immanent practices of existence, or what I call the *ahuman*. The ideal of universal humanity was the beacon of hope for oppressed peoples everywhere in the formation of new sovereignties and possibilities of life through decolonization. After a nearly forty-year indoctrination by market categories, however, the market now occupies the universal, replacing God and humanity as the arbiter of rights interpellated and recognized through market metrics. As a counterpoint, I propose the ahuman as a radical project for creating the intersectional alliances that humanism once proffered to resist the market's totalitarianism.

The ahuman not only problematizes sovereign subjectivity, and what, after poststructuralism, has often gone by the misnomer of "decentered subjectivity," but also questions the extent to which subjectivity itself is overly entwined with mechanisms of knowledge, certitude, and reason. As a result, focusing on subjectivity may ignore how affect, emotion, and experience interact with reason in the apprehension of existence. So, rather than reclaim humanism's universalist legacy of civilizing missions and paternalist oppression in colonial, imperial, and gendered contexts, or establish another transcendent category that may reassert species dominion, *Reified Life* traces how critiques of anthropocentrism unleash paradoxical new possibilities for thinking what ahumans can be. Ahumans are acentered forms of sentient life in the process of becoming that emerge through connections with objects, concepts, sensations, technologies, and other nonhuman entities that previously went unrecognized due to the givenness of the species form. I want to tease out such immanent types of agency, which still see emergent agents as free to challenge and change what is understood as the possible world, including the human and its *isms*. As a result, I argue for the humanist and Marxist idea of changing the world because these ideas are historical human inventions, subject to the foibles and failures of the human mind, and because the human, as posthumanists have documented, is no longer essential to its operation, from a position that is more readily identifiable as posthuman. Yet I introduce the premise of the ahuman as a way to bring the human back—not into the center, but as a sensibility of indeterminancy, a figuration machine. I argue that the ahuman, rather than constituting a focus that should be shunned given the reappreciation of ontological reality, should be attended to as a

messy network of actual and virtual images that reorient affective and sentient perception around a shuffling between regimes of truth. Ahuman processes are transindividuated, immanent figurations of life that offer alternatives to the market-centric economic ontology that consumes, conducts, and controls life. Let's take a brief sojourn into rethinking agency ahumanly.

What's in a Name: The Ahuman

Feminists, theorists of colonialism, critical race studies scholars, and philosophers of difference have offered the most complex political arguments on the need to think alternative intersectional possibilities of agency, specifically in light of entrenched hierarchical structures and processes of power. The triumphalism of humanism is a predominant focus of their critiques because it centers on white men of the European tradition as the universal subject of history and blocks alternative practices of otherness. Consequently, common intellectual strategies have included the multiplication of subjectivities to challenge the universal sovereign subject and received ideas of self-consciousness (the subject as substance in the Hegelian sense), and the foregrounding of unthought institutional racism, sexism, and the privileging of heterosexualism within the organization of knowledge and ethics that have normalized white supremacism and male domination. Feminists have critiqued anthropocentrism and upset binary constructions of gender, sex, and desire that entomb practices of existence within limited fields of intelligibility, channeling affect into familiar modes of patriarchal norms and compulsory heterosexuality. Materialist feminist texts think agency differently from the tired dualities of subject/object, white/black, man/women, nature/culture, and in some instances body/mind. For example, the 1985 "Cyborg Manifesto" of philosopher of science Donna Haraway touted the creation of new hybrid or networked identities that disturb boundaries between human and animal, human and technology, to envision a politics of affinities rather than identities: "By the late twentieth century, our time, a mythic time, we are all chimeras, theorized and fabricated hybrids of machine and organism; in short, we are cyborgs. The cyborg is our ontology; it gives us our politics."[34] Haraway's transformative analysis for rethinking feminism and political agency away from a politics of identity and the scourge of biological essentialism warned against the inchoate informatics of domination that used networks rather than hierarchies in order to create flexible modes of control. Her cyborg politics of flexible and strategic mixed ontologies opposed the language of the

master, consciousness, and rationality, as well as naturalized hierarchies and identities of fixed ontology, a position she further elaborated in her subsequent work with the human-animal question in companion species.[35] Haraway's celebration of the demise of stable categories responds to a complex hierarchical system premised on power exercised through centering organizational structures such as humanism, patriarchy, capital, state, consciousness, nature, culture, mind, body, and the narrative containment of texts. She also disputes transparent intelligibility through biological categories (gender), politics (liberal individualism), law (legitimacy and illegitimacy), empire, and desire, an emphasis emblematized by her important critique of phallogocentrism, shared by Derrida and Helene Cixous. Consequently, for Haraway, networked uncentered subjectivities (not individuals) and anti-humanism are potentials for destabilizing centralizing socially constructed categories, unleashing the possibility of new modes of narration and forms of life freed from the ground of purity.

Yet cyborg politics in the intensified digitalization of everyday life may become merely an articulation of new subject positions and identities as multiplicities, in the overcoming of humanism's horizon. Despite Haraway's anticipation of the inundation of reality by information and digital technologies, the cyborg evokes the Cartesian intentional subject of a new technological-human interface that can be somehow emancipatory, and neglects to consider the instrumentalization of the human that capitalism fosters to create "digital affinities." The cyborgian blurring of boundaries still assumes the prefigured form and matter of both entities, biological human and technological interface, and follows a logic of identity, albeit a mixed one. Hybridity stands in for a crisis of categories as the instanciation of life and the overcoming of purity as the key to a future emancipation. Hierarchies are ostensibly averted, and networks provide keys to freedom from enslavement. Yet networked subjectivities are centralizing tools of capital, as exemplified by the high-frequency trading discussed above, which paradoxically produces subjectivities in order to hide from them.

Rosi Braidotti updates the cyborg for the posthuman era in what I consider the most extensive and convincing argument on the posthuman that does not reduce politics to critiques of anthropocentrism, a topic I explore at length in chapter 3 with my discussion of object-oriented ontology. Braidotti maps the critical possibilities of what she calls "posthuman ethics" in light of all of humanism's failures and the need for strategies of critique that differ from the negative formulations of antihumanism: "We need to devise new social, ethical, and discursive schemes of subject formation to match the profound transformations we are undergoing. . . . [T]he

posthuman condition urges us to think critically and creatively about who we are actually in the process of becoming."[36] For politics she holds onto the subject, acknowledging that "embodied subjects" are schizoid, "internally disjointed," and "spectral," dominated by the logic of "simulation."[37] Yet, amid her argument for what was once called postmodern fragmentation and is now called the posthuman, Braidotti also assumes a stable distinction between the new ontological materialities and the old ones, and, seemingly, a subject capable of thinking these transformations and stepping beyond them, curiously rearticulating an intentional subject. Indeed, subject formation is the only moment of stability in this field of flux, and it still seems to represent some type of centering device, even when schizoid, disjointed, or mixed. Historically, as Braidotti outlines, the subject has been reduced to a creature of reason and destabilized through human affect, emotion, experience, and existence, which have challenged the Hegelian notion of it as a substance. The subject functions also, though, as a mechanism to bestow coherence on matter, ripe for capture by techniques of power and control. The *subject*, from the Latin *subjectum*, is etymologically what is "brought under," as in a type of control, and therefore functions as a centralizing form that may block the very intersectional affinities it seeks to enliven. Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari diagnose how control and power operate through mechanisms of decentralization in the production of new subjectivities and processes of subjectification, the very techniques that Haraway and Braidotti celebrate. However, we need to explore further the fine line between subjectivation (producing emerging forms of subjectivity) and subjectification (capturing and policing forms of subjectivity into recognizable forms). The latter, as Foucault describes it, is persistently exploited by neoliberalist and financial capitalist capture.[38]

Indeed, the subject, for Deleuze, is one of many flexible apparatuses of capture that mark "societies of control," which promote the production of ever-more-specified and divided subjectivities. Deleuze delineates a shift from the individual/mass dyad of Foucault's disciplinary societies in the production of regularized societies to what he calls control society's "dividuals" and banks of data and markets.[39] For Foucault, disciplines of the body, and then biopower at the level of life, become modes for normalizing human affect and subjectivity, and limiting the very "aesthetics of existence." Deleuze extends Foucault's analysis of biopower to societies of control to mark how power functions through "ultrarapid forms of apparently free-floating control" ("Control Societies," 178). "Dividuals" are not ruled by enclosures or limits on their expressions of individuality, but by the

evanescent codes that can arbitrarily grant—or deny—access to intelligibility, freedom, education, technology, and subjectivity. Instead of molds forming individuals, peoples, races, genders, and so forth, "controls are a *modulation*, like a self-transmuting molding continually changing from one moment to the next" (ibid., 178–79); "the man of control is undulatory, in orbit, in a continuous network" through perpetual training and the confronting of continuous variation of laws, rules, and technologies (ibid.). As a result, the destabilization of categories and the subject may be as much techniques of the control society as forms of resistance to it. Control operates, therefore, not only through marking limits on the freedom or possibilities of subjectivities, but also by perpetually constructing new services, new mixed identities and subjectivities, and then policing access to them through passwords, codes, the exchange of money, or discourses of authenticity: "Marketing is now the instrument of social control. . . . Control is short-term and rapidly shifting, but at the same time continuous and unbounded" (ibid., 181).

For Deleuze and Guattari, capitalism explicitly produces hybrid, schizoid subjects, and therefore they describe the subject as a molar formation, an apparatus of capture that conglomerates and seizes molecular possibilities. As an example relevant to speculative realist and posthumanist arguments, they chastise the subject for its assumption of being human.[40] Not unlike Bradotti, I argue that thinking agency differently requires new immanent conceptual tools for mapping existence, in order to not merely entomb agency within structures of recognition such as cultural identities, philosophical brands, or the subject of rights, but to conceptualize the dramatic practices of existence contained within the intersectional processes of subjectivation and subjection.

That said, the important lessons of materialist feminists still hold: Given the persistence of Enlightenment structures of political agency based on rights, civil liberties, and political subjectivity, which have won real political protections for dispossessed groups, albeit within the schemas of state recognition—for example, what has been popularized as "gay marriage." It would be reductive and politically suspect to dismiss the possibilities of subjectivity for energizing new freedoms for existence. The subject will continue to be the centralizing mechanism in the formation of emerging politics, as I ponder extensively through chapters on the uses and abuses of culture, human rights, and translation. I agree with Haraway and Braidotti on the role of subject formation from being to becoming, and I stress the materiality of bodies to think politics, to inhibit these dynamic forces of incorporation and normalization. Yet the subject has been captured increasingly through transactional categories of economics that limit the

human, an issue I discuss at length below. It is precisely this reduction that has spawned antihumanist and posthumanist discourses. To counter these formations, I reconsider Deleuze and Guattari's mapping of the subject not as a substance but as a frame for thinking the dynamic relational processes of becoming. To do this, I use what Terry Cochran calls "figures of thought," the materialization of practices that conglomerate to establish subjects and that may still operate alongside humans, though humans lack the means to recognize them.

Like Haraway with respect to the cyborg and Braidotti with respect to the posthuman, Deleuze and Guattari create such figurations of thought as "abstract machines," "planes of consistency," and "assemblages" to diagnose the machinic element of processes that co-constitute organic and inorganic immanent and dynamic formations of existence. They discuss the importance of the machine and affect in rethinking the subject as a field of energy or as relations of force that can be human or nonhuman, the molecular operation of power (Foucault's microphysics, Deleuze and Guattari's war machine), and how signifying systems conduct and block existence's efflorescence. Figurations are themselves evanescent affects of relations of power that emerge and potentially circulate by consistently transforming. Consequently, multiplying figurations of being that are distinct from identity and the subject gesture toward new temporal occasions of agency before they are thrown into subjectivity.

To elaborate this point and counter the method of identity and the subject, I turn to Gilbert Simondon. He offers a dramatic critique of hylomorphism, an idea from Aristotle regarding how form (*eidos*) imposes on matter, accentuating instead ontogenetic processes of individuation and transindividuation. Simondon challenges in this manner the givenness of being and concepts of ontology as stable or static form or matter, and instead propounds an energetics of existence. The subject becomes a moment in the concretization (or *concresence*, in his terminology) of what Simondon calls pre-individual potentialities that are enacted by processes of individuation. This movement from the abstract to the concrete does not have substance or essences, but is composed of values of phasings and dephasings, and is marked by the metastability of the relations and potentials. (These are issues I discussed above with regard to high-frequency trading.) Individuals are conceived thereby not as the source of reason or as imposers of forms of sovereign subjects, but as interactions of relational processes of individuation: "the problem of the subject is that of the heterogeneity between perceptual worlds and the affective world, between the individual and the preindividual."[41]

Simondon delineates from biology the premise of ontogenesis, coterminous with individuation, in the perpetual construction of reality. There is no hierarchy of forms or matter such as organic and inorganic, human and nonhuman, technological and human. Instead, there are modulations: technical beings that may be organic and inorganic, machine and human, and not some mixture or blurring of the two, *pace* the cyborg. Individuation is perpetually created by the interaction of pre-individuations, which resonate into individuations, and dis-individuations, constructing being as a perpetual unfolding or becoming: "becoming is not a framework in which the being exists; it is one of the dimensions of the being, a mode of resolving an initial incompatibility that was rife with potentials."[42] For Simondon,

> *Individuation corresponds to the appearance of stages in the being, which are the stages of the being.* It is not a mere isolated consequence arising as a by-product of becoming, but this very process itself as it unfolds; it can be understood only by taking into account this initial supersaturation of the being, at first homogeneous and static [*sans devenir*], then soon after adopting a certain structure and becoming—and in so doing, bringing about the emergence of both individual and milieu—following a course [*devenir*] in which preliminary tensions are resolved but also preserved in the shape of the ensuing structure; in a certain sense, it could be said that the sole principle by which we can be guided is *that of the conservation of being through becoming.*[43]

Simondon demarcates psychic and collective individuation as modes of individuated being through somatic and psychic interactions. In short, the body and individuation are not measured by consciousness, subjectivity, emotions, or property, but in their immanent structuration to affect and be affected via the relation of forces whose amplitude and tendencies create dynamic modes of individuation.[44]

Simondon reconsiders ontology, knowledge, and the subject through the "transindividual,"[45] and proposes a notion of transduction instead of dialectics.[46] Rather than techno-human interfaces, for example, the two are transducted to create interactions within what Simondon calls an "associated milieu." Technical being in Simondon's sense does not privilege the human as master of the tool or machine, but shows that the human itself is constructed by its interactions with technologies, and that technology is a form of autonomous agency, a point we discussed above with regard to high-frequency trading. Simondon thereby describes the transindividual as a field of potentials that resonates from pre-individual connections of relations that individuate and connect, and helps us understand

that automated machines, although programmed by humans, may have as much subjectivity as humans, and vice versa. Simondon's conceptualization of machinic forms of agency will help us to think the techniques of financialization I have been documenting precisely because agency happens in the middle of a process.

Although often characterized as the theorist of technics, Simondon actually proposes a new humanism, because "humanism can never be a doctrine or even an attitude capable of being defined once and for all; each epoch must discover its humanism by orienting itself toward the main danger of alienation."[47] Keeping Simondon's modes of individuation in mind and striving to think alienation without subjects, I want to reconsider the human, not as informing matter and dictating a universal subject possessing dignity—indeed, the historical record indicates how ineffective that has been, even as a regulative principle—but as pre-individual potentials that through their interaction create metastable individuations that are already collective. Simondon actually starts from nature as undetermined and views the human as an individuated mode of nature, rather than as its master. He puts forward a nonessential manner for thinking the human as incomplete evolutionarily, emotionally, affectively, and as an energetic field of individuations that through their connections within distinct milieus will create realities. The human *is* a transindividual human, an ahuman. For Simondon, the transindividual is collective; there is no separation of the individual from the collective, as they mutually contain pre-individual dynamics of the collective without any direct application of force or prestructured form. To think these new realities, we, figurating animals, map modes of being as immanent and dynamic modulations, not as forms.

Reified Life highlights Simondon's thinking through a cartographics of life to map emerging forms of existence, and assumes that the species, life, and matter persistently change and are ontologically indeterminate. Rather than seeing the human as external to nature or as conquering life, I explore humans as connected to and emerging from life. Life—human and otherwise—strives to connect, yet is everywhere captured, conducted, and embalmed by all-too-human criteria and anthropocentric modes of attention and understanding, which conduct other practices of existence through instrumental protocols. This is why financialization and neoliberalism produce forms of subjectivity and agency that we can only begin to map, as I do in subsequent chapters. I gather this idea of how immanence and life mutually co-implicate each other from Deleuze, whose debt to Simondon is paramount: "We will say of pure immanence that it is A LIFE, and nothing else. . . . A life is the immanence of immanence, absolute immanence:

it is complete power, complete bliss."[48] Life is immanent, not preformed or determined by the structures of resemblance, recognition, or analogy. It exists not in the conceptual mechanisms we use to contain or measure it, the process of individualizing or conceptualizing, but in the lived reality emerging in between moments without a preformed entity such as the subject, object, or being itself: "A life is everywhere, in all the moments that a given living subject goes through and that are measured by given lived objects: an immanent life carrying with it the events and singularities that are merely actualized in subjects and objects."[49] Deleuze uses the indefinite article *a* to refer to life as indefinite, only becoming through its entanglements of relations, such as individuation and transindividuation. From this, when we refer to the human, we know not of what we speak, but rather must trace genealogically latent potentials on the cusp of always emerging. Therefore, throughout this book, I trace how the human is captured and rendered stable through mechanisms of political economy, culture, law, and language, and how they organize the human along instrumentalities that, though often described in terms of freedom, actually control life.

Reified Life emphasizes the figurative and aesthetic status of the human as dynamic ontological contingency: a human that is ahuman, a form of life among many that simultaneously creates lifeworlds and is engendered by them, and often does not control or understand its creations. *A* is the first letter in the English alphabet, and functions as a vowel and as a preposition, while also bearing in Old English such different prepositional forms as "each, every, per," "before," and "on, into, in, to, toward." Furthermore, it has been used as a prefix to designate "not," as in *amoral*, *atonal*, and *achromatic*, and it carries a notion of plurality when it appears as a suffix, as in *data* and *theoria*. The *a* in the term *ahuman* thereby expresses simultaneously indeterminate and localized arrangements of being—associated milieus, in Simondon's phrase—and delineates the dynamic ontological processes of the human as merely *a* form of life, including other species, objects, technologies, and emergent processes. Accordingly, the ahuman *is* a material aggregation of matter, forces, affects, and sense-making techniques with objective and subjective connections understood as two points of view within the continuity of reality. I argue, consequently, for thinking the human as strategies and processes of becoming rather than as the conceptual matrix of sovereign subjectivity we inherit and inhabit from humanism, or in terms of a posthumanism that still renders the human into an object of knowledge to debunk. The human is ahuman, and the ahuman is human, as indefinite life comes into focus on the plane of reality

by mapping these moments of becoming. All of this is to say that ahumans are beings perpetually recreated at each moment in time through interaction with objects, other humans, spaces, nature, technologies, animals, figurations, and processes or preconscious sensibilities.

To complement and extend critiques of anthropocentrism but consider pre-individuations, I argue that the ahuman is the necessary, albeit dynamically transforming, figuration on which possibilities of agency can be mobilized. The ahuman as figuration machine produces an aesthetics of life that multiplies con-figurations of existence human and otherwise, and yet the ahuman still inhabits a world of all-too-human institutions. Ahumans function as differential and interacting networks of relations through technologies, economic forces, legal and nongovernmental institutions, languages, and historical sedimentations that disrupt perceptual givens; yet ontologically there is no relation other than immanent modes of becoming. Ahumans provide, however, *a* dynamic yet stable figuration to theorize transformations of life, while enabling politics that challenge human dominance without celebrating technological systems, nonhuman spontaneous processes as instrumental ends in themselves, or historicizing the posthuman condition. Such ahuman thinking could unleash new possibilities for forming collectives in addition to the habitual modes of culture and subjectivity, race, gender, class, and sexual orientation, even while acknowledging how they still act intersectionally, or through interconnections.

To summarize: The ahuman is a temporal figuration and strategy for marking ways of life in the middle of their emergence and reconfiguration. My goal in this book is to track two figurations that bring us far away from thinking the complexity of life: the techniques of humanism, which take existence and throw it into a preformed set of practices, knowledges, and possibilities of agency, and the posthuman, which is doing the same, albeit now armed with discourses of postanthropocentrism as a politics of liberation. As a result, I focus on techniques of humanization that are part and parcel with humanism, examining how they operate in the practical contexts of cultural commodification, but I also highlight more concretely the establishment of economic ontology to police the human, and the shuffling of forms of life within and outside human rights. Rather than dispense with humanism and the secular idea of changing the world and its operating fictions, I argue that we must also consider how they entomb political possibilities, holding the human to the promises of the nation-state, cultural tradition, or economic vitality. At the same time, I show through

speculative fictions how the posthuman is a redundancy and that the political question of the human is still unresolved. I propose that speculative fictions are one set of tools for thinking life differently, enfiguring these alternative lives and modes of thought that already reside among us.

The Unbearable Lightness of Being Data

Throughout this book, I trace the tyranny and narcissism of anthropocentrism and establish how political, economic, and governmental institutions already use governance, language, culture, scientism, data, markets, technologies, bioethics, and laws to reconceive life instrumentally and abrogate human-centered agency, much to the detriment of human freedom and possibilities for existence. For example, data has replaced human judgment as the primary means for measuring the good life and social justice, taking the human as merely the culmination of data sets. In my view, datacentrism, though it is a human product, is a bigger problem for cultural theorists and philosophers than the current obsession with anthropocentrism in academia, a point I will augment in several chapters.

To do this work, I unpack the category of life to consider how it has been entombed within anthropocentrism and postanthropocentrism, reified by the only animal foolish enough to imagine and declare itself the pinnacle of reason. Yet as numerous scholars and philosophers contend, from George Canguilhem, Michel Foucault, and Gilbert Simondon to Gilles Deleuze, life conceals as much as it reveals, and indeed life and living beings have their own historical and theoretical premises. In the words of Eugene Thacker, "Every ontology of life thinks of life in terms of something-other-than-life. . . . [T]hat something-other-than-life is most often a metaphysical concept, such as time and temporality, form and causality, or spirit and immanence."[50] To shift the debate from the human to life, I recognize how dynamic life is, how it transfers the terms from epistemology to ontology, and at the same time forces thought outside anthropocentrism. At the same time, thought, philosophical or otherwise, does not take place in an ahistorical socioeconomic vacuum freed from the material fluxes and flows and energies of the present, including the reduction of thought when the human and humanism are equated with Cartesian intentionality. That said, as data becomes transcendent, we must continue to fight for the human, understood, *pace* Simondon, as potential for individuation, not alienation, and must struggle against the entrenched modes of life promoted by technology and neoliberalism.

Organization of the Text

In three distinct sections, *Reified Life* maps flexible techniques of control through the instrumentalization of life. Part 1 is devoted to political economy in relationship to subjectivity, culture, and anthropocentrism. Its three chapters analyze how neoliberal economics transforms historical concepts of culture and subjectivity, and, ultimately, epistemological conceptions of the human, enframing human life within market categories that control human freedom. In this section I trace how human indeterminacy is captured and understood by a fixed ontological status of the human useful for financial capitalism, while reorganizing freedom and security within market categories. Part 2, comprised of two chapters, emphasizes legality, human rights, humanitarianism, and the (im)possibility of transparent communication. I extend debates on how legal and epistemological changes in the *human status* ultimately limit what forms of life are recognized as human subjects with legal protections. By delineating the inadequacies of Enlightenment legal mechanisms for protecting humans, I chart how that most human of institutions, the law, operates post-anthropocentrically in the concrete contexts of human rights and humanitarian law. The final section of the book marks literature's historical function as intelligence that defies instrumentalization and produces counterfactual knowledge. Part 3 of *Reified Life* focuses on authors who rethink the human beyond Cartesian subjectivity (autonomy and its purported intentionality), and includes specific readings of Gary Shteyngart, Kazuo Ishiguro, and Margaret Atwood. In my focus on speculative fictions, however, I shift the analysis away from the authors of these works and instead weigh the possibility that speculative fictions create different transindividual agencies in the act of reading that can foster alternative modes of criticism. As an homage to the poet Apollinaire, who insisted that artists should become inhuman, as well as in accordance with my interest in Michel Foucault and Jacques Rancière, I highlight the aesthetic work of *poesis*, the eventfulness and capacity for perpetual invention in figuration beyond any utilitarian function, through speculative fictions. *Poesis* is an instance of thinking *ahumanly* by creating new worlds of possibility and freedom for thinking, while making the habits of language stutter, as Deleuze once put it.[51] Speculative literatures offer "cartographies of life," mappings of the networks of structures of attention to what is recognized as life and ways to think life without assuming an exclusively human frame, which both humanism and posthumanism tend to do. What the ahuman offers that the posthuman does not is the recognition that we cannot dismiss the continued and necessary political possibilities of the human.

Chapter 1, "Market Humans: *Homo Oeconomicus*, Entrepreneurs, and Beings of Risk," considers the new consensus on governing based paradoxically on limiting the possibilities of governing and the quest for individual freedom as the *sine qua non* of emerging communities. This chapter is one of four focusing on the neoliberal market's capturing of subjects that renders them free within market limits. Drawing on Antonio Gramsci's "Americanism and Fordism," on the mechanization of human interiority to relish perpetual training, and on Michel Foucault's critique of neoliberalism, I diagnose what I call the industrialization of *homo oeconomicus*. The latter transcends the limits of the nation-state and exists through connection to capital and engagement in entrepreneurial activity and risk management—in other words, through the categories of financial capital. The entrepreneur is by definition a figure who has an idea for setting up a business venture, or merely the capital to support those who do; who is willing to exercise risk for the reward of profit; and whose teleological horizon is speculating on the future. Guided by the quest for perpetual growth and short-term profit, the entrepreneur incarnates the sovereign subject of political liberalism as a form of leverage, what I call the *market human*. This subject exhibits willful consciousness and responds to the entrepreneurial call by risking it all for an idea, for financial gain or merely the promise of great reward through speculative capital, an ethos currently emblematized by denizens of Silicon Valley, the alchemists of the so-called age of big data, and financial capital. Symbolically and ironically forming the central consciousness of the market human, the entrepreneur entombs human thinking, criteria for the species, ethics, and freedom within mechanisms of risk management. I argue that the entrepreneurial innovative subject of risk universalizes a nonstatist figuration of life that is globally remaking the entire social fabric of education, welfare, and, ultimately, how humans are recognized. Entrepreneurialism's dominant ethical criteria for recognizing human life has profound consequences, leading to the production of "redundant" humans who are deemed expendable because they do not sufficiently manage risk. They may be rendered as dispensable populations who live precarious lives as virtual economic refugees within their own nation-states.

"Utilitarian Humanism: 'We Other Humans' Regulated by Culture," chapter 2, focuses on UNESCO's World Culture Reports of the 1990s to examine how culture functions as a cash-nexus and renders human practices into cultural attributes that are recognized and valued for their utility, while reducing human happiness to a matter of choice. I document how the leftist positions of such cultural critics as Arjun Appadurai and ideas of

"sustainable development" resonate with Samuel Huntington's reactionary "clash of civilizations." Both positions—Appadurai's argument for cultural struggle and development from below, and Huntington's claims regarding cultural incompatibility, which ironically read culture as *realpolitik* statecraft—assume the givenness of culture as a form of resistance to some oppressive state power. They also share a similar faith in utilitarian defenses of culture, marked furthermore by UNESCO's conceiving of culture as human capital. I argue that culture becomes a mechanism for conducting and controlling ways of being, forms of life and human freedom, embodying what I call *utilitarian humanism*. Examining the thought of Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill on utilitarianism, which limit human intelligences, ethics, and creativity to utility through culture, I argue for the figurative multiplicity of conceiving life outside of the subject offered ironically by humanist *avant la lettre* Giambattista Vico, and by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari. To conceive humans beyond such utilitarian categories as the cultural human necessitates thinking nonhuman or ahuman modifications of agency as networks of relations of free singularities that are expressed as force, energy, and symbolic representation. This chapter is essential for thinking ahuman agency and materiality differently and for showing that culture may not function critically, but instead normalize utilitarian schema of attention and economic ontology.

In chapter 3, I elaborate how the universe of things predicated by object-oriented ontology works in uncomfortably close conjunction with financial capitalism, as both generate a posthuman reality. At the same time, I argue that proponents of OOO seem too preoccupied with the industrial capital of modernity and its production of stuff (objects and services) to mark its post-anthropocentric ontology—to consider how financial capitalism, which now accounts for over 33 percent of the profits in the economy despite comprising just 7 percent of the real economy and accounting for just 4 percent of the jobs, operates ontologically not through physical objects, but through leveraging debt and hoarding value.[52] Indeed, I demonstrate how the immaterial objects that OOO celebrates may include derivatives and hedge funds (themselves often pools of immaterial value). The shift from industrial capitalism's organization around the production of objects and capture of labor to financial capital's debt and leveraging marks what I call a movement from the logic of the object to the logic of the derivative and the hedging of debt/value. I discuss how the reification of life works in both of these contexts, and show that reification is a necessary term for thinking humans rendered into a field of assets and shares of value.

Part 2 of *Reified Life* focuses on the trials and tribulations of human rights, particularly the attempt to universalize the subject of rights, one of the most ambitious means for protecting humans in the wake of the reorganization of the Westphalian order of nation-states. I interrogate how human rights and humanitarianism in our neoliberal moment police human possibilities of existence as much as securing or protecting them through humanitarian governmentality, and how national languages are used to police the limits of the human as a legal subject. These mechanisms offer legitimacy to humanist modes that actually control immanent possibilities of life, while in effect establishing posthuman processes that increasingly throw vast populations outside the "human status." Chapter 4, "Human Rights and States of Emergency: Humanitarians and Governmentality," diagnoses how humanitarian nongovernmental organizations are filling a vacuum created ironically by governments outsourcing their governing functions, a development that signals a transformation of the Westphalian order of states. The proliferation of nonstate actors facilitates the politicization of human rights around how to recognize who or what is a human being endowed with natural rights, and who is a terrorist or outlaw. Tracing the connections between human rights and governmentality, I contend that human rights advocates must acknowledge that their cozy relationships with powerful militaries has resulted in humanitarian interventions using the language of rights to justify neocolonial projects that often intensify human suffering. Humanitarianism may function as a deterritorialized form of governmentality that offers a theatrical illusion of protection and security, while in actuality undermining their possibilities structurally. I analyze how powerful states indeed not only use human rights and humanitarian legitimations for their particularist geopolitical and economic ends, but also direct humanitarian NGOs strategically by proxy for their own interests. In the process, the very idea of securing humans becomes instrumentalized as a form of outsourced governance that eventually can become a model for managing "expendable people" within nation-states.

"Translating Rights: The International Criminal Court, Translation, and the Human Status" analyzes how the indeterminacy of language and translation before the law has surprisingly not shouldered much scrutiny in international legal contexts. In Western legal traditions since Aristotle, sovereign powers such as the nation-state have recognized the human subject as a being capable of language—the capacity that distinguishes human beings from animals—and therefore a subject before the law, a juridical subject. As the legal denomination for crimes against humanity designates

the accused as an "enemy of humankind" (*hostis humani generis*), the individual so named resides outside the boundaries of humanity. Following Aristotle's logic, the enemy of humankind does not speak a recognizable language. I explore the possible double dehumanization of defendants such as Thomas Lubanga before the International Criminal Court (ICC) in light of the legacy of colonialism in Africa and access to adequate translation. Legal jurisdictions may unwittingly normalize for many humans an unequal status before the law via the institutionalization of English and French as the *de facto* and *de jure* languages of human rights. I analyze the effects of conceiving translation instrumentally, which may unwittingly deny testimony to defendants such as Lubanga brought before the ICC. Translators' errors can institutionalize the loss of voice and communicability of those charged with crimes against humanity, or allow them to be freed due to the perception that the ICC is acting like a victor's court or neocolonial institution. To counter this, I argue for thinking translation as transformation and perpetual subject production, or more concretely, thinking of *translatio* in its most general sense, as a transferring or carrying over from one process or multiplicity/subjectivity to another. These arguments materialize a central tenet of translation that I argue provides a differing transindividual figuration of agency—a shuffling between different modes of existence that I call ahuman. Translation offers tools for thinking agency in circulation differently from financial capital's modes.

Chapter 6 begins a three-chapter section of the book devoted to speculative fictions as mechanisms for struggling with speculative capital. Speculative fictions envision unrealized future scenarios and employ a strategy similar to that of the forces of speculative capital, whose fictions have become our realities. Through a reading of Gary Shteyngart's contemporary dystopia *Super Sad True Love Story* and Deleuze on writing, I diagnose how literature might still serve a critical function in light of the digital reorganization of life. Shteyngart models a data-centered world wherein humans are products of their data for monetization, and interaction between beings has become mediated by a transactional reality. Shteyngart's critique not only unravels the distinction between appearance and reality by demonstrating how language is a form of matter, but also his writing allows for concepts to become existence. This is one of speculative fiction's major contributions for thinking ahumanly.

Chapter 7, "Between Words, Numbers, and Things: Transgenics and Other Objects of Life in Margaret Atwood's MaddAddam Trilogy," further outlines the concept of speculative fictions. In her MaddAddam trilogy of *Oryx and Crake* (2003), *The Year of the Flood* (2009), and *MaddAddam:*

A Novel (2013), Canadian author Margaret Atwood depicts a postapocalyptic and posthuman future in which the speculative promise of financial capital and biotechnology has destroyed the world as we know it. Atwood diagnoses the human as a bioengineered product, the effect of the synergy of science, evangelical positivism, utilitarianism, and messianic faith in human innovation and market-based solutions in the creation of transgenic beings. I delineate Atwood's profound critiques of humanism, posthumanism, and transhumanism and their incarnations in speculative realist/object-oriented ontology discourses by focusing on the instrumentalization of life in transgenics and critical theological and ecological discourses. To make this claim, I show how Atwood, as a writer of speculative fictions in her "ustopian" world modeling, challenges speculative capital's instrumentalization of life as risk management. Atwood opposes the rendering of life into an algorithmic game, a complex calculation that generates automated reasoning. I elucidate how Atwood problematizes claims of resistance to instrumentalization and power by religious and ecological discourses by demonstrating that nature, God, and bodies become tools for enfiguring complex processes that exceed the limits of human knowledge. The instrumentalization of life may market capitalist processes that already exist to reify the human. I argue that Atwood demonstrates the importance of critiques of anthropocentrism and speciesism; she shows, however, that they seemingly lack a concept of power except as anthropocentrism. If the concept of nonhistorical, fixed essences is challenged by what molecular biologists call *morphogenesis* and philosophers *ontogenesis*, I suggest that recent advances in tissue engineering, stem cell research, and biotechnology rethink life as a nonanthropocentric *process*. I speculate that thinking humans ontologically as dynamically networked life and process—in short as ahuman—may frustrate life's instrumentalization by the biotechs within free market capital.

Chapter 8, "Reification of the Human: Global Organ Harvesting and Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*," brings all of the above concerns together. Ishiguro's 2005 novel follows a group of genetic clones who have been created as wards of the British health service to serve a utilitarian function: They are manufactured for the purpose of having their vital organs harvested until their death. I argue that while the world Ishiguro envisions—a group of humans produced to be a living warehouse of organs—is certainly dreadful, it is nowhere near as horrific as what happens when uneven global development and the need for organs for transplantation intersect in our neoliberal present. Ishiguro shows how humans who view their humanity instrumentally expedite a world that is ready to

slice them into shares, monetizing all the parts along the way. Through Ishiguro's text, I diagnose the reification of the body as an aggregation of fungible body parts. I focus on what Karl Marx and Georg Lukacs referred to as the "reification of the human," but in reverse. Rather than an object or thing being endowed with human qualities as part of the social hieroglyphic of the commodity, the human is rendered into a network of things by technological or social processes. The human becomes an assemblage of monetized parts or things in circulation. Human reification challenges bioethicists and cultural critics alike to reflect on the extent to which human dignity and bodily integrity no longer serve as barriers for marking the species-limit, due to new advances in biotechnology. I argue that Ishiguro's text indicates the importance of ahuman agency, which bioethicists should consider to interrogate contemporary instrumentalized concepts of humanity.

The first four chapters of the book are organized around strategies for mapping sites of economic ontology, whereby the human is captured through market forces as the economic human, the cultural subject of utility or the utilitarian human, the posthuman, and the beings recognized and controlled by humanitarian organizations. In order to think the human differently without reveling in our posthuman afterlife, I trace how humans are conceived as sovereign subjects, cultural beings, and the objects of human rights. The latter two, recognition of humans as cultural beings and as entitled to human rights, have functioned historically as sites of emancipation for sovereign beings either recognized by the state or emerging through cultural practices. My analysis describes why they have not led to much freedom beyond the epistemological emancipation in the minds of those espousing them. The subsequent chapters describe both ahumans and speculative fictions and how they operate and mutually reinforce each other. Speculative fictions are the strategy to conceive agency differently; ahumans, the beings I describe in their immanent emergence. I conclude the book with a set of thought strategies, a user's guide to nonmarket living.

PART I

Instrumentalizing Life

CHAPTER 1

Market Humans

Homo Oeconomicus, Entrepreneurs, and Neoliberal Beings of Risk

To attract desirable and prosperous citizens, many national governments have altered their immigration laws through the development of "investment categories," not only to increase global investment opportunities, but also to fast-track certain sectors of the population for citizenship. In the United States, for example, an investment of $500,000 that creates at least ten jobs in government-sanctioned regional development centers can guarantee a green card for foreign nationals through the EB-5 Visa program. These programs have blossomed in cash-strapped municipalities such as Detroit, Chicago, Cleveland, and New York City that are still suffering from the austerity enforced in the aftermath of the 2007–08 economic crises. Such investment incentives show not only the commodification of citizenship, but also the commodification of sovereignty, as borders of nation-states can be transcended through specific humans' abilities to conjoin with capital.

I explore in this chapter how sovereignty has become connected to a field of recognition and legitimacy that grants greater mobility to certain subjects, while others—such as the legions of redundant humans in the global marketplace—must be policed and contained due to perceived risk.

This development marks a reconfiguration of the nation-state along economic instrumentalities. I will describe these processes below as a form of entrepreneurial governmentality that creates what I call *market humans*. Such beings can transcend the specific machinations of the state, while embodying a mechanism states use to outsource and franchise their sovereign governing functions to different corporate and nonstatist forces. I discuss the outsourcing of sovereignty at greater length in part 2 of this book, which is devoted to human rights and humanitarian governmentality. In practice, the legal protections that sovereignty once ostensibly guaranteed can be transferred to those connected with capital production, who as market humans are sovereign subjects, while others in effect lose or shun their legal protections as rights-bearing subjects in lieu of freedom to be in the market.[1] These are the ways in which Enlightenment political categories limit and protect forms of life, albeit those conceived in terms of economic instrumentalities. I contend that through these practices, humans attached to wealth generation become like autonomous free enterprise zones within nations and can circumvent local labor laws, wage requirements, and modes of taxation. How does this function? The human is reified within a delimited field of recognition; after Foucault, I call this being the *homo oeconomicus* of neoliberalism. The human is ontologically reconfigured as a type of capital—a medium of exchange and bearer of value—marking how economic ontology operates.

I analyze these inchoate formations by mapping how entrepreneurial subjects become privileged forms of existence to model biopolitical decisions. The entrepreneur is by definition a figure who has an idea, or the capital to support those who do; is able to set up a business venture; is willing to exercise risk for the rewards of profit; and whose teleological horizon is speculating on the future. The future-directed entrepreneurial subject is hailed by market forces who demand its perpetual remaking through risk management categories that now mark the border of inclusion within communities of individuals. I will diagnose this emergent subspecies of *homo oeconomicus* through the figuration of entrepreneurial life: the entrepreneur as subject of perpetual risk who manages that risk. In the process, I show how innovative entrepreneurial subjects normalize a concept of human life as risk management that is becoming universalized, remaking the entire social fabric of public education, concepts of welfare and labor, and even ideas of citizenship. Rather than being constituted as parties to the social contract of citizenship, which at least conferred the idea if not the perfect practice of generalized rights, within this scenario humans must reconfigure themselves as flexible entrepre-

neurial subjects who turn themselves into objects of innovation—assets who can manage risk. Entrepreneurial lives becomes lives that will thrive, while the majority of the world can be left to die through austerity measures. Those who fail to remake themselves as innovative entrepreneurs—who do not manage risk adequately, and fail to mark their value as assets—are expendable.

This chapter diagnoses this shift in the concept of *human* from corporatist subject of the nation-state–civil society alliance of modernity to *homo oeconomicus*, the flexible subject/individual emerging at the intersection of political liberalism, neoliberalism, and financial capitalism. I examine the dramatic instrumentalization of the human as a living being in light of speculative capital's reorganization of life, and document the capture of human subjectivity by numerically small populations who can exercise power. Speculative financial capital reifies virtual posthuman economic processes through information systems, be they credit default swaps, catastrophe bonds, bitcoin, "hits" or "likes" on a web page, or Twitter feeds, in order to generate wealth. At the same time, speculative capital creates and circulates embodiments of human subjectivity through the technique of morality, calibrated now on the dualism of paying debts and managing risk. These reified formations demand individual "accountability" or "personal responsibility," not for some connection to a larger community of fellow humans, theological duty, or fear of a transcendent God. Instead, individual responsibility follows the ethos of responsible risk management. The shift in emphasis from the group to the individual (why *class* is such a difficult term to mobilize in the United States despite its ubiquitous material reality) demonstrates a reorganization of concepts of human collectivities. Humans may conceive of themselves less through the social contract of citizenship, with its clearly defined rules, regulations, duties, and responsibilities, than through a speculative promise to achieve value through individual wealth generation. While this shift has been discussed before, *ad nauseum*, as an aspect of the intensification of consumer society, I speculate that this new form of subjectivity works differently, as it is produced by the financialization of everyday life wherein the real economy of objects and services is supplanted by leveraged financial instruments. In this regard, I focus on how the change in the formation of capital accumulation changes the human status, leading to a posthuman configuration of existence as hedged value. How then to think the human in the middle of its transformation? Before pursuing these issues concretely, I outline the processes that have industrialized human character and consciousness through work and the myth of the entrepreneur.

Homo Oeconomicus*: From Industrial to Entrepreneurial Spirit*

Antonio Gramsci linked corporatism and authoritarianism in the "Americanism and Fordism" section of the *Prison Notebooks* to outline the rise of a *homo oeconomicus* when discussing industrialization and the assembly line, which he argued engendered a new form of the human species.[2] Gramsci was writing before the massive closing of factories in Europe and the Americas from the 1970s onward, at a time when the factory was a central space of social formation in the United States. *Americanization* for him identifies a geographical, cultural, and political form collapsed under the category of the economic process, and should be understood less as a national marker than as an emergent formation of power and production, and thus a mechanism for policing human subjectivities. While Gramsci is concerned with the economic, he is also trying to diagnose the cultural and political-economic techniques that create ways of living, as they are all connected. Given that U.S. citizenship is based on a contract rather than on a territorial or essentializing cultural determination, the central organizing principle of American life for Gramsci (and for Ford and Tocqueville, for that matter) is work or labor as bonded to individual liberty, the freedom to contract labor. Work or labor identifies untethered economic forces and a particular form of governing, represented by Henry Ford's system of mass production, rather than an organic construction of the people or nation-state.[3] This shift from more traditional conceptions of citizenship to citizenship as contract creates forms of life whose very existence is measured through transactional economic relations.

While civil society as conceived by eighteenth-century political liberals would serve to regulate the state, Gramsci does not see a fundamental distinction between the two under Americanism:

> Americanization requires a particular environment, a particular social structure . . . and a certain type of State. This State is the liberal State, not in the sense of free-trade liberalism or of effective political liberty, but in the more fundamental sense of free initiative and of economic individualism which, with its own means, on the level of "civil society," through historical development, itself arrives at a regime of industrial concentration and monopoly. (*Prison Notebooks*, 293)

For Gramsci the liberal state under Americanism produces a new type of human, a flexible, adaptable being who lives to work, while maintaining an exceptional moral character. The melding together of production, circulation, and consumption as productive economic forces paradoxically

monopolizes the individual's moral existence. Economic individualism, according to Gramsci, is incorporation, a form of industrialization to produce types of human subjectivity, including limiting how people think, while frustrating alternatives to the corporatism he is diagnosing.

Gramsci highlights, for this reason, the efforts that Henry Ford took to create productive *and* moral humans while mobilizing Frederick Taylor's principles of scientific management toward economic efficiencies. The monotony of repetitive industrial activity—Taylor's breakdown of the industrial process so that a "trained gorilla" could work on the assembly line (Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, 302–03)—may affect the human cog in the machinery. Hence other facets of the worker's life needed cultivation; otherwise, the human element might disrupt the mass production system's efficiency by devoting its attention to interests other than the shop floor. Therefore Ford strove to produce morally and religiously astute beings, by industrializing their overall way of life. To that end, he provided wages three times above average to encourage consumption, enabling his workers to buy, for example, the cars that they were making. In return for high wages, with their implicit mandate of consumption, Ford's workers were obligated to participate in prescribed communities and follow the institutional protocols of Christian morality by cultivating families, abstaining from drinking, and even buying houses whose layouts Ford had overseen to ensure that the homes would facilitate their development of good character. Joining predetermined organizations was a sign of the individual's fortitude, self-control, and moral righteousness, and indeed showed how Taylorist methods were at work to govern not only the physical movements of the workers, but their mental processes, character, and ultimately their self-consciousness. Indeed, Gramsci describes Ford's development of the corporatist human—Fordism—as using morality for a hegemonic project of control, what he calls the "puritanical" element of American industrialists:

> [T]hey are not concerned with the "humanity" or the "spirituality" of the worker. . . . This "humanity" and "spirituality" cannot be realized except in the world of productive "creation." . . . "Puritanical" initiatives simply have the purpose of preserving, outside of work, a certain psycho-physical equilibrium which prevents the physiological collapse of the worker, exhausted by the new method of production. This equilibrium can only be something purely external and mechanical, but it can become internalized if it is proposed by the worker himself, and not imposed from the outside, if it is proposed by a new form of society, with appropriate and original methods. (*Prison Notebooks*, 303)

The consciousness of workers becomes itself industrialized as a moral imperative, internalizing the mechanisms of their own standardization as worker/consumer, or normalizing their souls, in Michel Foucault's language.[4] The liberal subject is the agent of the state–civil society alliance, which deploys individualization and incorporation to orchestrate human capital. The worker/consumer through his or her own volition becomes competitive and machinic in physical and mental processes, including in intersubjective encounters—both in competition with others, as well as in working with them, due to the moral and consumption imperatives he or she has accepted. At the same time, a concept of community outside the productive process provides a safe space to avoid the human's psychological and physiological collapse. Under Ford's paternalistic system, given that his immigrant workforce was still primarily Christian, religion offered a transcendent counterweight that conferred on human life a meaning external to work, though it also fostered duty and responsibility useful for the workplace, a point that Max Weber went to great lengths to show in his exposition of the Protestant work ethic.[5]

Gramsci delineated a central facet of modernity that is now melting into thin air, namely, the existence of a source of meaning aside from economic forces—the realm of nation, religion, or any other idea of the human external to its formation as capital. National and religious subject productions were complementary to, but nevertheless external to, economic figurations when Gramsci was writing, and the idea of the human as having an existence alongside the tenets of work still held in Europe. And most importantly, Fordism focused on normalizing humans at the site of labor, marking labor's dominance in the organization of society. Gramsci also offers through his description of Americanization and the puritanical element a theorization of the importance of human capital development by governments and corporations, well before Chicago School neoliberal economist Gary Becker invented and popularized the concept in his classic 1964 *Human Capital: A Theoretical and Empirical Analysis, with Special Reference to Education*.[6]

Contrary to American receptions of Foucault as an unrepentant antihumanist, in my view his writing demonstrates his preoccupation with the status of the human amid machinic processes of power that upend any sense of anthropocentrism, emblematized by his theorizations of biopower. Biopower is not merely a technology to think political technologies and forms of power after political sovereignty, but Foucault's attempt to outline how power became invested with not merely the control of individual bodies or souls, but with control of life and living beings, the very status of

human and nonhuman life, including technical processes. His 1979 Collège de France lectures, *The Birth of Biopolitics*, elaborates this distinction, collecting his devastating interrogation of neoliberalism and offering a sustained engagement with this school of thought before its institutionalization by Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan in the 1980s. Through analysis of the work of the Ordoliberals in postwar Germany and the Chicago School of Frederick Hayek and Gary Becker, Foucault charts how free market capitalism governs humans as capital who desire security, but without limiting freedom, through a theory of liberty that is nonstatist.[7] Nonetheless, the Ordoliberals, employing an actual historical awareness of Adam Smith that is missing from contemporary business and management circles, still want governmental forces to direct life, and in particular human capital, through education, language, health, and social order, including securing property rights for the market. Foucault outlines in his biopolitics lectures the securing of life using governmental rationality, but with the market exercising power and control. To that end, life must be reified, made knowable, calculable, and predictable in order to be controlled through biopolitical techniques. Furthermore, the techniques of the state are merely one set of power among many used to form humans.

Foucault diagnoses the distinction between biopolitics' subject and the Lockean and Humean "subject of rights." He marks the shift thereby from the rule of law and self-abnegation before the state to economics and markets, and the centrality of human capital and the economy in forming and directing the regime of truth for society:

> *Homo oeconomicus* strips the sovereign of power, inasmuch as he reveals an essential, fundamental, and major incapacity of the sovereign, that is to say, an inability to master the totality of the economic field. . . . A sovereign [in the Middle Ages and through the seventeenth century] could be absolute and marked out as God's representative on Earth, but the designs of Providence still eluded him and encompassed him in their destiny. Now, beneath the sovereign, there is something which equally eludes him, and this is not the designs of Providence or God's laws, but the labyrinths and complexities of the economic field. To that extent I think the emergence of the notion of *homo oeconomicus* represents a sort of political challenge to the traditional, juridical conception, whether absolutist or not, of the sovereign .[8]

For Foucault *homo oeconomicus* challenges the theological worldview and the juridical subject and historical concepts of state and civil society in light of neoliberalist capitalism. It also undermines concepts of civil society from

Hobbes, Locke, and Montesquieu, as well as weakens a sense of sovereign or unitary power. The state becomes merely one corporatized actor among many within society because of the shift in political rationality from sovereignty to security that reifies and organizes life. This formulation shows that Foucault, as I have been contending with Gramsci, was interested in techniques of governing that operate alongside the technologies of the state because both are in a symbiotic relationship to direct the economy. While it could be argued against Foucault that the market becomes the only transcendent, a virtual sovereign, such a claim assumes a distinction between governmentality and civil society, rather than their mutual presupposition and coimplication, as Foucault, Gramsci, and Karl Polyani outline.[9]

Indeed, Foucault diagnoses a biopolitical shift from the sovereign subject to the emergence of processes of subjectification/subjectivation in modernity. In his engagement with Gary Becker and Thomas Schultz of the free market Chicago School with regard to human capital, Foucault contends that the individual does not own his labor, but merely channels fields of energies and forces that can be tapped within a limited period of time, for example before obsolescence or old age, and operates as a capital investment. Foucault, therefore, proffers the need to think processes of individuation and subjectification in a wider field of normalizing rationalities. The shift in the post–World War II period to an interest in human capital as a natural resource to be "developed" aligns it dangerously with eugenics thinking.[10] Yet Foucault also warns how the emphasis on human capital marks the production of flexible subjects who envision themselves as investments:

> The breakdown of labor into capital and income obviously has some fairly important consequences. . . . [T]he worker's skill really is a machine, but a machine which cannot be separated from the worker himself, which does not exactly mean, as economic, sociological, and psychological criticism said traditionally, that capitalism transforms the worker into a machine and alienates him as a result. . . . This is not a conception of labor power; it is a conception of capital-ability which, according to diverse variables, receives a certain income that is a wage, an income-wage, so that the worker himself appears as a sort of enterprise for himself. (*Biopolitics*, 224–25)

In this extraordinary passage, Foucault diagnoses the shift from labor-power to the ability to become capital, the human as enterprise, the human as asset, a shift we see exacerbated with greater financialization that is part and parcel of neoliberalism's normalization. For Foucault, the co-implication

of human and machine as technical beings within the enterprise indicates that machines are not tools in the service of humans, but co-constituted complex processes in their mutual production, a point discussed in the introduction in connection with Gilbert Simondon and individuation. For Foucault, the shift to a conception of *homo oeconomicus* in neoliberalism is centered on the figure of the entrepreneur, "an entrepreneur of himself" (*Biopolitics*, 226), who envisions himself as an investment to be worked on, as capital. *Entrepreneur* derives from the word *entreprendre*, "to take more," and generalizes the enterprise form. The human conceives itself in a sovereign manner only for its "capital-ability" to be invested in and to become through exchange in the market; in other words, as an asset instead of as labor power. The individualizing function coincides with civil society: The individual will conceive him/herself as a free enterprise able to contract for wages as the limits of existence, while being a subject to be governed (securitized) as an investment. In a passage that resonates with Gramsci's diagnosis of the industrialization of consciousness and affect, Foucault contends: "The ordoliberal model of making the enterprise the universally generalized social model functions in their analysis or program as a support to what they designate as the reconstruction of a set of what could be called 'warm' moral and cultural values which are presented precisely as antithetical to the 'cold' mechanisms of competition" (*Biopolitics*, 242). As a result, the human entrepreneur-enterprise views its freedom as the freedom to contract, and pleases him/herself as a private investment without any system of reciprocity of duty or obligation to other beings, community, or state. The latter are the hallmarks of political democracy, but now the signs of "'warm' moral and cultural values" are the individual's freedom to choose risks and avoid moral hazards, not understood in the manner of Gramsci, in terms of religious burdens, but in terms of rational economic behavior in light of perverse incentives that distort the market. Gramsci and Foucault suggest a technique of power based on individualization and self-gratification through the compulsory production of self as an unfolding enterprise in competition with others, but now without an "outside" to the economic organization of knowledge. In other words, the entrepreneur-enterprise becomes a sovereign subject of the market with cultural goals and willful agency via its incorporation into the market through acts of consumption, value generation (time management), or speculation—the *homo oeconomicus*' social contract. The human becomes a human subject through the categorical imperative of acting like an investment from which value can be derived.

For Foucault *homo oeconomicus* is "a grid of intelligibility" for the operation of techniques of governing at the macro and micro levels of shepherding

beings along market instrumentalities: "someone who pursues his own interest, and whose interest is such that it converges spontaneously with the interest of others. From the point of view of a theory of government, *homo oeconomicus* is the person who must be let alone" (*Biopolitics*, 270).[11] Specifically, Foucault diagnoses how individual freedom has shifted from a political to an economic register, and even operates as an individualistic mode for governing life. *Homo oeconomicus* is manageable and responds "systematically to systematic modifications artificially introduced into the environment" because she or he "is someone who is eminently governable" *(Biopolitics*, 270). For Foucault, *homo oeconomicus*'s interest in neoliberalism stems from thinking the production of humans who paradoxically embrace *laissez faire* and nonstatist governing techniques that, while normative, do not feel that way in their exercising; they are perfectly aligned with the present knowledge economy, the rise of big data, and the efflorescence of financial capitalism since the 1970s. The economic human views freedom through the market and access to goods and services, and embodies emergent synergies between differing political constituencies of the Left and Right who are united by their hatred of the state's rules and regulations, coupled with the desire to be securitized from risk through police actions without a *de facto* state or rule of law behind them.[12] Moreover, the liberalist promise of freedom is the rudimentary technique for governing effectively: "The fundamental objective of governmentality . . . [within neoliberalism is] . . . the insertion of freedom within governmentality"; it is "an element that has become indispensable to governmentality itself. Henceforth, a condition of governing well is that freedom, or certain forms of freedom, are really respected. Failure to respect freedom is not only an abuse of power with regard to the law; it is above all ignorance of how to govern properly."[13] The exercise of freedom is individualizing and massifying, producing an agent whose freedom is based on being effectively governed by institutions, even if they are nonstatist, such as nongovernmental organizations, nonprofits, or for-profit security forces. (I consider examples of each of these modes of governing in subsequent chapters.) For Foucault, "Civil society, therefore, is an element of transactional reality in the history of governmental technologies, a transactional reality which seems to me to be absolutely correlative to the form of the governmental technology we call liberalism, that is to say, a technology of government whose objective is its own self-limitation insofar as it is pegged to the specificity of economic processes" (*Biopolitics*, 297).[14] Foucault argues, *pace* Gramsci, that faith in civil society normalizes a transactional reality, a contract form of subjectivity, while neoliberalism builds from this by delineating civil society as an extra-statist form of governing directed by and for

the economy. Governance is competitive and self-limiting insofar as it will govern most by governing least, like the mythical *laissez faire* market.

The entrepreneur as global figuration of individuation can become an archetype, I argue, by which to model the emergence of transnational governing techniques of human populations, normalizing *homo oeconomicus* as the entrepreneur of the self and embodying the governance of (neo)liberalism. Other human forms may be trapped, policed, and controlled with the technologies of sovereign nations, including, as Bernard Harcourt has argued,[15] the warehousing of "failed subjects" as social policy. Indeed, for Foucault, governmentality as security is the means for governing humans as economic beings regardless of state technologies, including national languages, *raisons d'état*, cultures, democratic rights, or concepts of citizenship, because the economic and the political are so intertwined. At the same time, the nation-state's technologies are still pervasive as regimes of truth in which to believe, even when these technologies no longer protect humans and the operating fictions of democracy.[16] *Homo oeconomicus* is biopolitically produced through governmental calculation, rationality, and regulatory mechanisms to create the individuals or forms of life that governments and markets recognize. However, these governmental calculations need not be orchestrated by the mechanisms of the nation-state:

> It is now a matter not of modeling government on the rationality of the individual sovereign who can say "me, the state," [but] on the rationality of those who are governed as economic subjects and, more generally, as subjects of interest in the most general sense of the term. . . . This, it seems to me, is what characterizes liberal rationality: how to model government, the art of government, how to [found] the principle of rationalization of the art of government on the rational behavior of those who are governed. (*Biopolitics*, 312; brackets in cited text)

The rational structure of liberalism persists and transforms in neoliberalism, as I will discuss below, through individualism and risk, which operate paradoxically, yielding compulsory governing through the embrace of freedom within volatile and risk-filled financial markets. In other words, the very mechanisms for actualizing individual freedom produce a domineering and compulsory individualism among subjects of risk whose self-actualization comes through accepting risk management as their ethical telos, even when it may make their lives more precarious.

Although Foucault and Antonio Gramsci are thinkers from different traditions, Gramsci's analysis of how work industrializes human character, consciousness, and interiority, like an assembly line of *bildung*, resonates

considerably with Foucault's description of flexible processes of entrepreneurial subjectivation. In my above elucidation, Foucault and Gramsci claim that civil society is a transactional form of liberalist governing that establishes norms, the status and judgments of truth, and the procedures for understanding humans who seek security and rules to protect their interests via economic categories, but who desire to be left alone when obligations or taxation are demanded for that security. For Foucault, the individual as enterprise sees greater profit as his or her moral foundation and demands security as a form of risk management. For Gramsci, the puritanical element of liberalism recreates civil society as atomized workers in competition who perform a specific function on the factory floor, yet are able to create an affective sense of self external to economic forces through the transcendent force of religion and/or community, though these too are industrialized, like product lines, by various religious institutions and cultural identities. This is why Fordism did offer some redistributive mechanisms such as high wages, but part of the transaction was an overarching corporatist paternalism. Despite Christianity's disciplinary powers, subjectification, and threat of eternal damnation if one strayed from its regularizing practices, it guaranteed a day off of work to unplug from the demands of capital, and the idea, if not the reality, that the human soul inhabits a realm apart from work. In addition to relying on faith in divine beings, however, Ford took guidance from the higher powers of scientific rationalism and efficiency, and marked the industrialization of workers' *bildung* on the assembly line of human capital as readily as he did their Taylorist physical movements.[17] Work/consumption becomes a moral good, so self-betterment at work becomes a primary means of development of self-consciousness and subject formation external to work, creating a moral continuum. What Gramsci anticipates through Ford and Taylor and Foucault furthers is the idea of the human as capital, as morally good, with a duty to invest in or become an entrepreneur of the self; a Taylorism of the soul. This human-as-enterprise connects to the needs of the market and can just as easily be replaced depending on the immanent requirements of the market. Rather than see the market as an imperious and domineering force of normalization, this operative regime of truth purports that states are all powerful and markets englove the individual in the invisible hand of market freedom. The individual ironically normalizes his or her own state of abjection for failing to align with the needs of the market, which requires atomized individuals to remake themselves through retooling and reskilling as a moral imperatives.

Gramsci on Americanization and Foucault's lectures on neoliberalism diagnose a new theory of the reified human beyond Enlightenment concepts of citizenship and the sovereign subject. They show how power relations enfigure humans, who become subjects through market integration as market subjects. At the same time, both Foucault and Gramsci foreground the importance of Taylorist modes for conducting human existence along economic efficiencies via normalizing physical movements and industrializating consciousness and affect. In the process, they are theorizing mechanisms of governance external to what Althusser called ideological state apparatuses. Furthermore, they demonstrate the psychoaffective, mental, and physical normalization of Taylorist methods in new contexts external to the factory. They help us to understand the orientation of humans to technology, the new transcendent, from the optimization of the user interface on a smartphone, to the informal practice of flex-workers, whose individual freedom is marked by their freedom to contract and forego job security, pensions, and employer-paid healthcare.

In varying degrees, Foucault and Gramsci evaluate the universalization of economic morality as transcendent within modernity through two separate techniques. First, modern forms of intelligence are produced through industrial processes of standardization that start on the factory floor and extend to other networks of affective affiliation such as education, the welfare state, cultural community, religion, and nation-states that have operated paternalistically to reproduce society as human capital to be modeled and shaped. These techniques, however, come into existence not purely through disciplines and coercion, but through individuals aligning with the norms and regimes of truth. Some interesting regimes of truth include the reorganization of societies and subjectivities from those organized around labor and wages to others organized around assets and investments, an effect of the monetarist revolution that started in the 1970s and had been normalized by the 1980s. Second, the inchoate caste of economic humans are, as an alternative, arrayed around a set of skills, products, ideas, consumption patterns, or common sense regarding assets and debts, and come together only in their belief in their individual exceptionalism, as an aspect of their freedom. Let me elaborate with a concrete example.

In 2005, Citigroup's equity strategies research team led by Ajay Kapur wrote an article entitled "Plutonomy: Buying Luxury, Exploring Global Imbalances" for its most valued investors that proposed the "bold" thesis that democracy was being usurped by what the authors termed *plutonomy*.[18] The plutonomy concept—namely, rule of the economy and society by a

wealthy few—was based on the fact that 1 percent of the population in the historically Anglo-Saxon countries of the United States, Britain, and Canada held 40 percent of net financial wealth ("Plutonomy," 3). The authors claimed:

1. The world is dividing into two blocs—the plutonomies, where economic growth is powered by and largely consumed by the wealthy few, and the rest. . . . What are the common drivers of Plutonomy? Disruptive technology-driven productivity gains, creative financial innovation, capitalist-friendly cooperative governments, an international dimension of immigrants and overseas conquests invigorating wealth creation, the rule of law, and patenting inventions. Often these wealth waves involve great complexity, exploited best by the rich and educated of the time.
2. We project that the plutonomies (the U.S., UK, and Canada) will likely see even more income inequality, disproportionately feeding off a further rise in the profit share in their economies, capitalist-friendly governments, more technology-driven productivity, and globalization. ("Plutonomy," 2–3)

The emerging plutonomies are nothing entirely new; the English, Spanish, Dutch, and American empires used colonialism and immigration for wealth creation, and other governments have institutionalized corporatist policies that exacerbate vast disparities in wealth. Kapur et al. diagnose an alternative mode of governmentality that capital demands: Capital-friendly spaces govern best by governing least while subsidizing innovation, including development of new markets and disruptive technology that replaces workers, coupled with flows of new people who will work for lower wages (the young, immigrants). For the Citigroup authors, instead of guaranteeing democracy's promises of social justice or equality before the law, the rule of law in a plutonomy is geared toward extirpating economic corruption that may upset the smooth operation of capital, while it also allows for tax havens "exploited by the rich and educated" and for corporate ownership of new inventions through rigorous patent laws. Yet the authors indicate that the market is the universal subject of history that makes rational choices among possible nations or peoples that it recognizes. Instead of Louis Althusser's subject formation through the institution of the police, the plutonomic market humans hail subjects via entrepreneurial innovation and flexible movements of people and goods, not-so-miraculously located in centers of financial capital that exhibit an Anglo-Saxon flavor.

Written before the economic crises of 2008, Occupy Wall Street of 2011, and the populist candidacies of Bernie Sanders and Donald Trump, challenges to the European Union via Brexit, the French vote in 2016–17, and the acknowledgement of systemic economic inequality, this document shows the normalization of social organization and subjectivities around wealth creation, entrepreneurialism, and the human as transactional investment—all signature elements of financial capitalism. Kapur et al.'s plutonomy is not marked by statist, ethnic, racial, or national identities. Indeed, the authors speak at length about the benefits of immigration for simultaneously keeping costs down, breaking any unitary sense of culture, and increasing competition, but also for increasing dopamine levels ("Plutonomy," 4)! In sum, Kapur and Citigroup are describing how the market interpellates the human through entrepreneurial modes of value, which even biologically operates at a different level of the species: "In a plutonomy there is no such animal as 'the U.S. consumer' or 'the UK consumer,' or indeed the 'Russian consumer.' There are rich consumers, few in number, but disproportionate in the gigantic slice of income and consumption they take. There are the rest, the 'non-rich,' the multitudinous many, but only accounting for surprisingly small bites of the national pie" ("Plutonomy," 3). Although there is a danger of a backlash against the plutonomy, as long as most people hold out the idea that they, too, can join it (like the market doublethink of entrepreneurial "job creators" in the United States), the plutes will be safe: "Perhaps one reason that societies allow plutonomy is because enough of the electorate believe they have a chance of becoming a Pluto-participant. Why kill it off, if you can join it? In a sense this is the embodiment of the 'American dream.' But if voters feel they cannot participate, they are more likely to divide up the wealth pie, rather than aspire to being truly rich" ("Plutonomy," 24–25), by demanding fair taxation of the *uber* wealthy.

Speculative and financial capital realize the importance of creating a people who believe that they, too, are lavish consumers and entrepreneurs *in potentia* and can be called by the plutonomic market human. This form of social control, like the American dream, allows even the vast underclasses in the United States and Britain (their target audience) to support policies that technically frustrate their own prospects for economic mobility and keep vast inequality entrenched. The prospect of their eventually being called into the plutonomy beckons just beyond the ever-shifting horizon—the promise of being chosen by the market to lead the new world economic order. These formations assume wealth production as humanizing process, with the market exercising transcendent judgment

regarding who gains access. Like Foucault on biopolitics and human capital, the Citigroup thinkers consider strategic relations as a way of providing possibilities of freedom within existing economic, political, and social structures. While obviously far from Foucault in their ethical and moral judgments and exhibiting enormous hubris, these writers are describing a world that they and their financial brethren at the hedge funds, equity firms, and banks have already helped bring into existence, as a form of social control normalizing vast disparities of wealth and consumption patterns.

The Citibank policy wonks are trying to conduct and manage the anthropomorphized market and leverage risk without any transcendent moral or ethical conundrums, and to think in terms of short-term economic profits and with a long-term vision of reorganizing knowledge and truth in terms of risk management to "secure" the plutonomy. But this raises a central question about the reorganization of knowledge and regimes of truth around economic being: Why do humans who can barely pay their bills aspirationally believe they too can enter the plutonomy? In my next section, I will address how the entrepreneurial regime of truth is established in concrete contexts through the production of the market human, and how the discourses of aspiration and exception, always mainstays of U.S. social control, operate in the entrepreneurial sector as a mechanism of freedom from the states' institutions, which historically have ostensibly guaranteed protection from economic malfeasance.

Market Humans

Anthropologist Aihwa Ong documents fluid sovereign processes and emergent subjectivities through the flexible citizenship of the multiple passport holder who seeks citizenship in order to avoid political instability as well as to extend sites of possible investment and consumption. Specifically, Ong focuses on a type of individual to be found among the diaspora of Chinese from Hong Kong before its "return" to China in 1997. Called *astronauts* (*tai hong yan*) because they are always "in orbit," these members of the Chinese diaspora travel by plane between destinations in which they have dropped some form of investment.[19] Astronauts are neither located within nor bound to any singular conception of culture, language, or citizenship, for their processes of subjectivation have been created by capital circulation. They are cosmopolitan, hybrid, extraterritorial, quasi-national entities who are recognized by the passports they purchase. The astronauts do not evoke ontological primacy to territory or roots, but embody humans as capital, a

social relation as speculative value, using their "floating" advantage to avoid paying taxes to any sovereign nation. Having no essential or organic connection to territory, they orbit different territories because of their mastery of the *lingua franca* of the market (i.e., English), their ability to perform subjectivities for flexible security, and their connection to capital.

In sum, they are *homo oeconomicus* and can be described through the very terms of the global market they exemplify. While Ong's anthropological work is specifically devoted to participants in the Chinese diaspora, the astronaut is merely one example of what I have diagnosed as *homo oeconomicus* in entrepreneurial neoliberalism. Extending her earlier work on the astronauts, Ong's *Neoliberalism as Exception: Mutations in Citizenship and Sovereignty* shows the separation of citizenship, territoriality, and sovereignty and how it disrupts traditional conceptions of subjectivity bounded by borders and tied to specific geographies and rule of law and citizenship protections, as well as how the separation transforms the cultural practices and ways of living of those whose subjectivities are produced by neoliberal capitalism.[20] For Ong, who uses examples from China in the 1990s and 2000s, the establishment of Special Economic Zones or Special Administration Regions in China creates exceptional spaces for nonnationally bounded state and nonstate actors who follow market logics irrespective of the states in which they are geographically housed. An example of the state now focusing solely on directing economic activity rather than regulating it, SEZs and SARs employ the state's sovereignty to produce extrajuridical zones outside the state's control for market optimization from taxation, regulation, or the nation-states' labor laws. These autonomous economic zones use "freedom" to legitimize their creation of special territories in which Foucault's *homo oeconomicus* can govern populations. Governing is primarily management of the economy. These zones institutionalize new flexible labor practices without regulations and produce populations of people who are free to assume the risk of catastrophe at the workplace. At the same time, they institutionalize a kind of freedom that is limited to *freedom from* state institutions, regulations, and laws—a curious notion of freedom in light of extended work hours that capture what used to be called leisure time.

After Gramsci and Foucault, I call such flexible subjectivities the *becoming-market of the human* or the *market human*, a figure that has been freed from the confines of a specific nation or state and can function in several different conceptual lifeworlds as an economic being. The market human is *homo oeconomicus* and, like those who inhabit Ong's economic enterprise zones, is at home in several national languages and in particular in the

language of economy—English—yet can identify with or live freed from language's production of emplacedness and highly coded identities. Market humans shares similar wealth, styles of existence, and the aesthetics of corporate modernism, a sophisticated urbanity that revels in its sameness, marked by the capacity to buy "uniqueness" by owning and wearing a Tourneau watch while sipping a $7 latte in a Starbucks. They are transnational elites whose regime of truth is free market faith in entrepreneurialism and the human-as-enterprise as the social generator of society. The neoliberal consensus of the market human may develop through direct schooling, as in the case of the so-called Chicago Boys in Chile, or through the MBAs from the London School of Economics and the Ivy League schools of the United States. Like the comprador intellectuals of colonialism, these elites claim their specific interests as universal and align them with the development of humanity itself. Yet unlike the compradors, market humans do not swear allegiance to or represent any communitarian, corporate, or collective ideal, other than the promise of entrepreneurialism underwritten by the language of speculative and financial capital.[21]

As exceptional beings who inhabit a different free market legal zone for wages, taxation, and job security, but still seek to enjoy security, market humans function like embodiments of special economic enterprise zones. They are what the Occupy Wall Street movement identified as the 1 percent, the high net worth individuals (HNWIs) with concentrated wealth who pay taxes at lower rates than do most low net worth individuals (LNWIs), gain mobility through liquid investment instruments as do the astronauts. They eviscerate governmental consumer protections, but also use or buy governmental techniques to facilitate their entrepreneurial worldview. The market human embraces ideas of community but retools them with liberalist affective registers, for example extolling the virtues of what is referred to as the *sharing economy* or *gig economy*, whereby digital technologies put people in contact to contract work or a service, and thereby monetize communitarian values. Indeed, the lucrative return on investment of economic communitarianism marks an instance of the social contract being monetized as a transactional form. Moreover, the market human demonstrates how the human as form is captured and put to new uses, often against the very notions of the human historically associated with humanist defenses. At the same time, for the market human the human is still epistemologically central, but shorn of liberal humanist defenses of dignity; indeed, the market human denies dignity to the majority of the world's population, except as an aspirational symbol. Market humans are, however, posthuman in the most oppressive forms imagin-

able, insofar as they see little need for human collectivities, only for exceptional individual humans. To elaborate further, let us consider how the Silicon Valley techno-utopian ethos embodies market human figuration and entrepreneurial being.

Such Silicon Valley corporations as Apple, Airbnb, Lyft, Box, and Uber represent market humans in their natural habitat of situational autonomous zones and embody entrepreneurial life mixed with techno-utopianism. Through technological mediation, digital applications generate vast sums of wealth for their platforms by offering services to large sectors of the population with smartphones. They tout convenience, low costs, and the idea of empowerment and freedom from pesky unions or government-mandated rules and regulations. Uber, a car sharing service based in San Francisco, has no formal regulations and initially did not pay taxes because it is not legally organized as a taxi company; instead, it offers a technological platform, a digital application, to bring free agents together, for a "nominal fee" of 25 percent of the cost of the ride.[22] By invoking the "sharing economy" and the use of the technological interface, Uber avoids taxation, regulation, and any legal protocols for hiring. Consequently, Uber has very few actual employees, as all the drivers are freelancers (individual entrepreneurs) who do not receive benefits; they connect to the application, offer their services, and are given no formal vetting save a background check. Uber shows, in Taylorist fashion, disgust with labor costs, seeing them as unnecessary business expenses that could impinge upon Uber's speculative value as a futurally directed asset. In any other context, hiring without a face-to-face meeting with a representative of the corporation would be considered irresponsible, but given the use of "new" digital technologies, the application and system are considered revolutionary, cutting edge, and safe. Uber's drivers participate in the gig economy, within which they are offered no security or guaranteed wages, and routinely find the terms of their agreement rewritten, depending on the needs of the platform makers. In fact, as Uber's software is proprietary, drivers must trust the company that they are indeed being compensated correctly for the agreed-upon fares paid by the customer. They can seek solace in what Uber extolls as the freedom to "drive and earn as much as you want," because "you'll always start and stop on your time—because with Uber, you're in charge,"[23] and affectively register their futural orientation to the flexible gig economy of precarious employment.

Furthermore, while Silicon Valley–style corporations do not per se follow a different set of laws, as do free market enterprise zones, they do seek tax havens and transfer assets offshore to avoid paying taxes to the IRS,

while fostering the entrepreneurial life that can be divorced from the unpleasant consequences of social inequity in the nation-state that surrounds them. Numerous journalistic accounts discuss the gentrification of San Francisco and New York City as entrepreneurial tech sectors remake working-and middle-class environs such as Oakland, San Jose, Brooklyn, and Jersey City. These tech companies have fostered social inequity while driving the poor and middle classes from city centers to locations often far removed from access to public transportation that would provide the poor with access to employment opportunities. In an ironic twist, Google, Facebook, and Apple provide shuttle buses from San Francisco to their headquarters, so that their employees need not be exposed to undesirable members of the public on their way to jobs promoting the sharing economy, created through the digital technologies conceived in Silicon Valley.[24] Furthermore, Silicon Valley routinely outsources employment to contingency workers, specifically those with temporary H-1B visas for qualified math and science workers. While the pay may be excellent for foreign nationals, if not always on par with what U.S. workers would be paid, the guest workers are beholden to the companies who sponsor their visas. The companies may renew the three-year visa up to six years, and then sponsor a worker for immigration . . . or not, affording the company greater control of the worker, without the cost of retirement benefits. In this regard, Silicon Valley corporations use the tax laws of the United States to create temporary market humans, governing their employees through immigration and guest-worker laws. These corporations indicate that national origin plays a lesser role with regard to the employees they seek and interpellate than economic and skills control, and so they take a "we are the world" approach to inclusion that they police through hiring market humans and firing those who do not sufficiently innovate. The market human is thereby a hybrid, a cyborgian, in Haraway's sense, a perpetually recreated entity that delineates a flowing of the human as competitive capital, with an orientation toward transcending any laws or borders that plague it. These economic humans want to be left alone, or "free," in the market, even if such freedom makes their lives more precarious, because they can afford to buy services to manage risk effectively while avoiding taxation, or, like the astronauts, purchase legal protections. Sovereignty in the marketplace becomes another commodity to be bought and sold, as the market polices human life and adjudicates the limits of freedom within the market.

It has been proposed that the primary means through which the values of the tech elites have been normalized into the market human is their having attended the same educational institutions or their working in the

same tech sector.[25] But this view neglects to consider the universalization of this ethos, even among populations who will be denied the sovereign decisions of entrepreneurial activity and will live a life of greater insecurity. Market humans do not support security in the interests of human welfare, for example in the form of workplace protections for the majority of their employees. They foster low wages, with horrific effects, as instanced by sweatshops producing Apple IPhones and computer components, the manufacturing of clothing in Bangladesh, Vietnam, Pakistan, or Swaziland for all of the major retailers, adjunct instructors in sites of higher learning, or drivers who can choose not to work for Uber when they find that they are not making the money they were encouraged to believe they would earn. (These workers' precarious lives exemplify inchoate forms of a future global order, because market humans force workers to exist as extrajuridical beings shorn of rights when they enter special economic zones.) As human life itself becomes more precarious due to the rule of a plutonomic elite in such countries as the United States, the market also provides, ironically, the figurative means to become free in an otherwise highly regulated, policed, and unequal society that celebrates unfettered individualism and yet generates an existential dread of insecurity. As civic life has eroded because the nation increasingly seems to be run by and for economic elites, many outside of these formations have reached for fundamentalist identities such as hypernationalism and racial and ethnic purity, variants of the eugenics-based thinking of which Foucault warned. Consequently, even those who were once called "the dangerous classes," the poor and impoverished, can identify with the market human, as it forms their common sense. (The election of brand entrepreneur and developer Donald Trump is perhaps a manifestation of this idea, as he evokes hypernationalism to gather followers, while deregulating markets to make the world safe for market humans to transact business.) The market as freedom is ironically a tautological form of social control, for it embodies the idea of freedom in people's otherwise hyperdetermined lives, even when it is inequality within the market itself that actually regulates their possibilities of existence.[26] Market humans affectively identify thereby with the market more readily than with the forces of the state designed to ensure public welfare through legal protections or economic redistribution through equity-based taxation. The market instead guarantees equality before the law by providing the purchasing power to gain access to the law (freedom to contract). Moreover, when wages are stagnant, the market, counterintuitively, provides a means to gather wealth as high net worth individuals do, by leading to the lowering of individual tax burdens, even if the amounts saved are

considerably smaller for most people than for the wealthy. As the Citigroup authors diagnosed, the figure of the entrepreneur is tied to the American dream myth, which figures the United States as the space to which entrepreneurs immigrate in order to realize their potential in its free markets. Everyone can be an entrepreneur, for example by driving for Uber, starting a small business, or investing in real estate, adopting a ready-to-hand form of reified subjectivity that offers the promise of eventual acceptance into the promised land of boundless wealth. As markets are free and every other realm of existence highly regulated or bought and sold, the promise of the market and its eventual calling holds strongly. In the process, the market in the United States industrializes the market humans' regimes of truth along the twin pillars of entrepreneurialism: that individual innovation will set you free, and that individualism is freedom from the state—pesky consumer protections, regulations, and taxation are enslaving freedom.

This organization of existence is further strengthened by digital technologies and the ideology of innovation and being through the market as the means to a self-edifying social transcendence. Free digital platforms allow for a sense of connection and the limitless possibilities of self in a virtual realm, as long as one has access to a smartphone or laptop. Digital technologies enliven the biases of neoliberalism and financialism by normalizing exceptional individuals. With digital technologies, all of us can transcend our immediate conditions and become exceptional through generating content (a porn or cat video, a Jackass-style feat, a Twitter rant) that could become the meme of the day. Virtual technologies technically democratize all users with access to global services, ostensibly enabling communication, freedom of movement, and access to other people's lives, for little cost. At the same time, they democratize all users as data and as potential sites of datamining and futural monetization. As digital profiles and data guided by economic instrumentalities become as important as the biological being in the physical universe, previously dispossessed populations can be hailed as viable assets for their user, viewing, and browsing habits, yet still be viewed as surplus populations due to a scarcity of jobs.[27] In this manner, humans become bundled assets of futural data, ripe for speculation. Indeed, large populations generate more value as streams of data that enable companies to make generalizations about the human or posthuman condition, while marketing goods and services to these products of data, than as biological entities seeking food, clothing, and shelter. In sum, empowerment as market humans through use of complex technology offers a small amount of freedom in people's otherwise highly regu-

lated material lives of work and obligations, even when the tracking of their lives as data in effect renders them into a product. The invigoration of the virtual realm that promises infinite exploration of goods, knowledge, and boundless individualism is, nevertheless, limited by the biases of algorithms that determine and track the humans' movement through them.

These mutually co-implicating and edifying processes encompass also what I call the humanization of the market, the becoming-human of the market. The legal extension of sovereign subjectivity to corporations reached a pinnacle with the 2010 *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission* case, demonstrating how the market human's economic subjectivity can also be juridically nonhuman. The *Citizens United* decision, itself demonstrating an Orwellian doublethink for neoliberalism, claimed that corporations are legal persons who can exercise free speech through donations to political candidates or political action committees.[28] Techniques such as this legal decision exemplify the extension of *homo oeconomicus* to anthropomorphized enterprises. In the process, corporations become quasi-sovereign political and juridical subjects through the mediation of capital—legal incarnations of a corporatist economic humanity through the enterprise form. In the United States, the profusion of nonprofits with 501 (c)(3) and 501 (c)(4) designations creates another form of corporate economic being. The designation 501 (c)(3) is meant for the protection of religious, charitable, educational, and scientific organizations, as well as those that support amateur sports and public safety testing; such organizations are often committed to generating knowledge or disseminating particular viewpoints. Organizations designated 501 (c)(3) cannot, however, lobby openly in political campaigns. The IRS most frequently permits 501 (c)(3) tax-exempt status for public charities and private foundations, and donation limits are imposed. A similar designation, 501 (c)(4), may be claimed by groups committed to the nebulous term *social welfare*. 501 (c) (4) activities that are charitable, educational, or recreational are tax-exempt as is their status as a nonprofit, but donations to the group and its political activities are not. These organizations, like America First, a new 501 (c)(4) devoted to enacting President Trump's agenda, can openly lobby and have a veneer of legitimacy (absent from political action committees). They also frequently blur the lines between educational and charitable work and political lobbying by publishing educational reports. These nonprofit organizations operate entrepreneurially by connecting ideas with money to orchestrate the changing of local, state, regional, or national laws, and humanize draconian market policies by marketing to affective registers. For example, the American Legislative

Exchange Council (ALEC), a conservative 501 (c)(3) committed to using governmental techniques to diminish statist governmental power, is a think tank that provides a countersite of knowledge-production to the university. It has crafted model Stand Your Ground gun legislation of the kind that has been used to legitimate the killing of unarmed black youths, and that became notorious after the Florida case in which George Zimmerman was exonerated for his fatal shooting of Trayvon Martin. While strictly in the business of information, ALEC readily crafts model legislation pertaining to charter schools, the curtailing of unions, gun freedoms, the lifting of regulations, and tax breaks for the wealthy that is roundly adopted by state legislatures (many of whose members belong to ALEC). The organization embodies a different kind of corporate-state alliance. ALEC's alignments exemplify *homo oeconomicus*'s informal networks of nonstatist institutions, and exhibit how entrepreneurial governing operates through "intra-actions" between nongovernmental organizations and government agencies. It is no small wonder that governmental calculations increasingly perform via business categories, such as the horizon of risk management as a marker of life. In my next section, I will explore how entrepreneurs, a subset of market humans, seek great risk and reward through their ability to focus on short-term capture and manipulation of life's forces by universalizing the financial criteria of risk and reward. This demonstrates how financialization produces economic ontology.

Manage Risk or Die: Market Humans and Policing the Human

Managing risk is the central technique used by *homo oeconomicus* to predict and contain future crises and threats. Insurance and other epistemological and institutional techniques of control try to make risk manageable through mathematical calculation. Systems theorist Niklas Luhmann historicizes the function of risk as an object of knowledge specific to modernity, starting with its first mass usage in seventeenth-century England: "Perhaps, this was simply a loss of plausibility of the old rhetorics of *Fortuna* as an allegorical figure of religious content and of *prudentia* as a (noble) virtue in the emerging commercial society."[29] For Luhmann, risk identifies an orientation to society through different fields of study, risk analysis, risk perception, and risk management, an orientation that becomes a central focus of judgment and decision making. Drawing on Luhmann, Ulrich Beck, in his *Risk Society* and *World at Risk*, established the importance of risk in sociology and in thinking the establishment of generalized risk as a (market) human value

due to terrorism, ecological disaster, and economic crises. Risks have the unique ability, for Beck, of de-individualizing humans, merely because they do not discriminate based on class and show how all forms of life can exist precariously. Risk itself becomes the *sine qua non* of the human community due to the limits of human knowledge and the contingency, unpredictability, and unknowability of existence and inability to control the future. Yet, through risk analysis, humans try to understand uncertainty and predict or manage the future.

Beck's diagnosis of modernity contends that the nightmare vision of the totally administered surveillance society that he erroneously ascribes to Foucault and Adorno and Horkheimer has not come to pass, but normalization and standardization have been achieved due to risk management. Rather than a liability, for Beck perpetual surveillance and control provide the "staging" of risk and protection, even if such surveillance merely provides a tool for risk management. What Beck initially identifies in risk societies becomes global, demonstrating risk as operating with "the destructive force of war," including terrorist attacks and environmental degradation. Information technologies and social media democratize access to knowledge about risk that "subverts the role of experts"; and "security is displacing freedom and equality from the highest position on the scale of values." To avoid fear, freedom can be actualized only through security or controlling risk; the individual will be secured and even "grateful when he is scanned, photographed, searched, and interrogated 'for his own safety.'"[30] As general risks nullify the privileged knowledge of experts, anticipating risk encourages the colonization of the future with risk as the central criteria for the possibilities of human agency in the conducting of life. Governments must overcompensate to manage risk, as seen in the use of preemptive strikes in the war on terror, or the prospect of enactment of draconian immigration laws in the time of Trump. Anticipating worst-case scenarios or imagining risks that defy human imagination and comprehension such as ecological destruction, even if they never happen, indicates governmental efficacy. Governments govern thereby in the manner of insurance agencies or speculative capitalists looking for potential sites of investment. As a result, the "risk calculus" replaces the "social contract" for Beck in the production of subjects of risk (*World at Risk*, 27), who feel that their lives are precarious until calculability—statistics, insurance programs—gives a sense of certitude in the face of the chaos of the unknown. Enter streams of data, to calculate and represent the undecidability of present life.

Amid risk management as ethos, the interconnection of global markets demonstrates that a "social contract" may in fact be in place to manage

risk: Citizens in specific nations end up funneling their tax dollars to insure speculative capital against its potential failures. Governmental processes mobilize citizens regardless of their social class to see themselves as market humans and become the buyers of last resort for assets no transnational corporation would find sufficiently worth the risk, a curious duty for the economic subject who wants to be left alone. For example, when the United States bailed out the insurance agency AIG, the U.S. taxpayer subsidized several U.S. corporations that had insured assets, betting that they would lose value, including Goldman Sachs, Wachovia, and Bank of America, but also non-U.S. companies such as Deutsche Bank, Societé Genèrale, Royal Bank of Scotland, Banco Santander, and Barclays, among others. As Serena Ng reported in the *Wall Street Journal*: "While the U.S. government is busy trying to prop up the housing market—by trying to limit foreclosures, among other things—it is simultaneously putting up cash that could be used to pay off investors who bet housing prices would tumble and many mortgage holders would default."[31] Governmental policy actually gives taxpayer money to banks and equity firms who bet on credit default swaps in volatile markets, despite the failed risk management of the financial institutions. In sum, U.S. citizens insured the private profits of global financial capital, which could have been invested virtually anywhere, with every imaginable kernel of risk picked up by citizens of sovereign nations rather than by corporate shareholders or CEOs, who are compensated according to the corporation's profits. All continued to profit through the housing markets' failures because they bet on the failure they were actually orchestrating. Furthermore, governments show their functional priorities by mobilizing their citizenry for speculative and financial capital using tax money that could go to human welfare services (education, health care, infrastructure, even, ironically, security) within nation-states. Not only were capital lines of credit and borrowing subsidized by the U.S. Federal Treasury, in effect absorbing the risk of corporations and banks with few conditions attached, but the very entities that had catastrophically failed to manage risk were consolidated by government action. The governmental calculation of risk indicates the need to remove financial capital's risk at the expense of vast swathes of that government's own citizen-population or the very life of the state in all its institutional incarnations. In the process, governmental action actually subsidized the becoming-human of the market, putting the banks and equity firms before the nation's citizens, while universalizing risk as an ethical horizon in a transactional reality.

Conclusion

Joseph Schumpeter, writing in the 1930s, famously cast the entrepreneur as the engine of capitalism through his or her capacity for creative invention of objects, ideas, and services, which perpetually produce new sites of capital production through innovation. Capitalism is a form of "creative destruction" in his infamous phrase, due to intense competition and dynamic overcoming of existing structures. Schumpeter claimed that when capital loses its capacity for the innovation of entrepreneurial activity, capitalism would eventually fail and lead to corporatism, marked by democratic socialism and recognized by increased numbers of welfare states ushered in by intellectual elites. Entrepreneurial innovation, the "creative destruction" of capitalism, would suffer due to workers' being in charge of their own management through unions and demanding more regulations. Individuals would connect democratically and form collectives for their own security and protection, to the detriment of innovation.[32] Market humans believe in their own powers of self-creation, with free will and an individuality that is supplemented only by a sense of community based on the freedom to innovate. For example, Silicon Valley has embraced Schumpeter's idea of individual innovation and collectivities only through the technologies it creates. This shifts the expression of individual power from uniting into institutional collectivities such as labor unions or being focused on labor, to innovative individual expression and becoming monetized on "shared" technological platforms and the asset flows of financial capitalism. Workers are the friction in this system, blocking the God-like transcendent of innovation that keeps companies or exceptional individuals from consolidating a generalized corporatism to destroy competition. Yet these arguments deny the corporatism that emerges via corporate consolidation and monopolization, as such companies as Google, Amazon, and Facebook, flush with capital, buy out their present or future competition before these companies issue their IPOs. In sum, the barbarians at the gate that Schumpeter warned could destroy the system are in fact the consolidating companies themselves.

The entrepreneur does not self-identify as a worker, but as a human subject who functions as a conduit between capital and risk, thereby as an economic human whose very existence is threatened by incorporating or corporatist processes that nevertheless produce and guarantee his or her existence. To reiterate, the entrepreneur is the economic human who is governable and who wants to be left alone. At the same time, if life is conceived as a business plan, then the entrepreneur embodies the universal

subject of freedom. The entrepreneur must struggle with the forces of corporatism that Schumpeter warns against. The market creates individual free subjects of, and as, perpetual innovation who are governable, but expect nothing in return from governmental or nongovernmental institutions. These beings incorporate risk into their existence and being, and thus are the expression of the market. To maintain control and grasp this fluid and dynamic system, they employ data. However, some risks are monstrously incalculable, such as mass irreversible environmental degradation, and, purportedly, the global economic failure of 2008. Risk management technologies fill in this epistemological chasm with a transactional reality, a type of duty or of rights. They produce such entrepreneurial ways to manage life as cap-and-trade credits to monetize environmental degradation, or credit default swaps, which allow companies to bet on risk in the event that a market catastrophe may or may not happen. As a result, the insurance equivalence of calculation and compensation breaks down to a generalized state of risk for every individual to control himself or herself in light of perpetually lurking risks (Beck, *World at Risk*, 52). Following the model of insurance plans, risk calculus standardizes human practices to render human life more calculable/governable, while recognizing human agency through economic activity. In a paradoxical fashion, the entrepreneurial individual can be free only through his/her ability to manage risk because of governmental failure to do so adequately. The individual acts like an insurance plan and embodies entrepreneurial life. Risk becomes internalized as perhaps coterminous with self-mastery and "knowing thyself" for *homo oeconomicus*, as a way of separating him/herself from other forms of humanity and from community.

The universalization of entrepreneurial life as the dominant figuration of market humans fosters governmental compulsory individualism that is not viewed as a form of lack or loss, but as a choice for paradoxical individual empowerment in the generalized chaos of risk. Accepting risk entails becoming an agent, while, as Randy Martin puts it, "the principle policy trope for those who could not abide risk was war—on youth, crime, drugs, culture, and ultimately under the sign of failed modernity *tout court*, terror."[33] The entrepreneur as the manager of risk offers a more global outreach and usurps such standardizing procedures as ethnic identification and organized religion in creating the market human, a subject of risk from any geography who internalizes the mechanisms of the market as a risk/reward dyad in a speculative future. Due to risk and innovation becoming dominant modes of existence in entrepreneurial life, human workers have internalized the need for flexibility, including accepting the potential

obsolescence of their skills and the demand that they remake themselves innovatively or entrepreneurially through new skills acquisition. Indeed, the human perversely uses the very language of financial capital for self-definition, viewing itself as "an asset," as "value-adding," literalizing the human as a financial enterprise, the affective and immaterial forms of the production of self with life as a business plan.

Subjectivity becomes, thereby, the culmination of speculative returns, modeling events for wealth creation. This can take the form of generalized entrepreneurialism coupled with compulsory individualism, while the ethical range of thought is increasingly limited to the risk/innovation dyad of the entrepreneur. Competition, risk management, and innovation establish the stabilization of market human life within a state of perpetual flux. *Homo oeconomicus* becomes a flexible mode of entrepreneurial life conducted through the ethical horizon of the risk/reward dyad of the transactional market, the becoming-market of the human. Market humans must individualize risk and exercise control over themselves in their self-creation as entrepreneurs.

Governments outsource their governance to 501 (c)(3) and other non-governmental institutions, which further delineates the connection between wealth and the capacity for agency. However, as Gramsci articulated with regard to Fordism, consumption has long been one of the safety valves for social discontent. If there is a generalized crisis of consumption due to vast social and economic disparity, how can flexibility and assumed risk fill the void? The subject of risk no longer has any anchor to a collective because of the latter's complexity and inherent risk, regardless of Beck's claim for an enforced cosmopolitanism, inuring humans to these techniques of individualization. Risk societies participate in the disintegration of social organization such as the welfare state or family networks, *pace* Gramsci's Fordist corporatism, due to the need for "flexible" economic humans as individual subjects of risk. Flexible networks of accumulations, workplaces, and intelligences become generalized models for perpetual change, with their effects of employee downsizing, reengineering, outsourcing, and corporate mergers and acquisitions. These processes lead to ever-more-precarious existences for those unable to anticipate risk, and honor the demand of the transactional reality for humans to perpetually innovate themselves along capital's changing imperatives. For Christian Marazzi, these mechanisms of inequality may even cause a crisis of consumption, as attention to internalizing the self as a flexible financial service (an asset) may usurp the demand for consumption: "The financialization of the 1990s generated additional incomes but, beyond distributing them

unequally, it created them by destroying occupational stability and salary regularity, thus helping to exacerbate the attention deficit of workers-consumers by forcing them to devote more attention to the search for work than to the consumption of intangible goods and services."[34] The enforced perpetual subject-production of reengineering the self to the demands of financial capital is still teleological, with the entrepreneurial life as the individualized sovereign subject to come. In effect, these processes determine the limits of the subject and conduct innovative invention toward futural speculative profitability. Indeed, in my view human subjectivity may operate through the short-term lens of a financial derivative, a point I will return to in chapter 3.

Given this configuration of power arrangements, in closing I want to draw attention to the other humans, those who are not recognized within the entrepreneurial matrix of flexibility, despite the fact that they are the ones who live in a state of perpetual insecurity with regard to financial status, nutrition, legal issues, and health. They embody life's insecurity. Yet rather than representing the need for "resecuring" human lives through the reformation of economic and social processes, they become the pathological other for this globalized form of life. Instead of actually confronting, thinking, or critiquing these social forces in order to change them, the entrepreneurial market human internalizes the anxieties of insecurity, while turning the precarious and insecure humans themselves into another facet of risk to be avoided, as witnessed by the buses Google and Facebook provide for their employees. Or these other humans may be recreated as a potential derivative for speculative capital, as a component within a risk calculus for future investment, as the "Plutonomy" authors indicate. Those who somehow fail to thrive within the innovative global life, who remain too much creatures of place, can become a community's liability rather than asset, and *can be rendered a disposable surplus population*, *because there is no ontological sense of commonality*. Zygmunt Bauman calls these figures "collateral damage" humans, Giorgio Agamben terms them *homo sacer*, or naked life humans, while Michel Agier speaks of the refugees that have proliferated as sovereignties change as "the undesirables."[35] The presence of these other humans is an issue I explore further in chapter 4. The "undesirables" cannot innovate themselves, for they are overdetermined by the ruins of sovereign modes of state boundaries, and therefore grasp onto nation, patriotism, or, in certain circles, white privilege or Christian belief. Unlike the market humans, they cannot purchase the citizenship of expedience to grant them freedoms. They are beings who fail to innovate, who are unable to adapt to the *laissez-faire* present. Holding onto "regressive"

traditions, patriotism, religions, and/or quaint entitlement programs, they lack flexibility and fail to meet the demand for perpetual growth (a mandate despite its unsustainability) and must be secured away from the market humans and innovative entrepreneurial life. What happens to the Citicorp authors' "multitudinous many," the surplus populations who do not live up to the configuration of entrepreneurial market humans who are remaking the world in their image while removing the conditions that would enable the majority of the world's population to attain this status? They are too risky, though they encompass the vast majority of the world.

This market world picture seems ripe for a colossal systemic crisis, as entrepreneurial life cannot continue to remake the world in its image. Indeed, the rise of these paradoxical forces and values may help to explain, albeit incompletely, the Far Right movements that have gained strength throughout the Euro-Americas, seemingly united only in their sense of precariousness, their rejection of elites embodied by globalization, and their rejection of knowledge and truth. Indeed, I would suggest that these processes explain how a silver-spoon developer and reality television star from New York, Donald Trump, could become the voice of primarily southern and midwestern evangelical Christians, nationalists, racists, unemployed workers, and employees in manufacturing industries holding on only through compression of wages, loss of guaranteed pensions, and adequate healthcare. These strange bedfellows are united by their sense of shame, inadequacy, and being left behind by the second coming of financial capital's innovation, outsourcing, and asset and debt leveraging. The followers of Brexit leader Nigel Farage and of Donald Trump and Marie LePen are grasping onto ready-to-hand anti-immigration, anti-Islam, anti-nonwhite, antiglobalization, antigovernment, anti-elitist, and increasingly antidemocratic platforms. Due to their generalized state of insecurity and precariousness, many people seize upon a mythic nostalgia to combat the unintelligibility of the present. This proliferation of Far Right positions marks, I think, the other side of the unmooring of the human from a fixed position and status. The unmooring has led not only to the new, liberatory ways of thinking the human freed from state and intentional subjectivity that posthumanists celebrate, but also to a stultifying nostalgia that strives to manage away the indeterminacy of existence. Nationalist and white supremacist subject positions are individualizing modes that marginalize social existence and resist basic premises of politics. Nonetheless, they function defiantly as resistance to seemingly posthuman forces.

Trump, who inherited wealth and then made more money by leveraging his assets (including his name as a brand) and marshalling his debts to lower

his tax burden, asserts himself as the voice of the people. Trump strategically offers hope for the future to dispossessed populations, who feel that their future has already been outsourced by speculative capital. His heavy-handed inauguration speech emphasized that only he looks out for their interests in the face of elitist others who have captured the American Dream for their own entitlement, often paradoxically coded as nonwhite and poor, which was meant to boost psychologically the dispossessed whites who support him. Meanwhile, his policymakers, many from the fraternity of financial innovation, firms such as Goldman Sachs and J. P. Morgan, further dismantle consumer regulations and mechanisms stemming from the War on Poverty of the 1960s that once underwrote social programs and at least helped frustrate mass precariousness. Indeed, while it is early in Trump's administration, his initial platforms indicate that he is claiming to protect precarious populations within a national frame, while making the world safe for market humans with fewer regulations and therefore greater financialization to leverage debts and assets. He speaks a discourse of the dispossessed, allowing his followers to hold onto his words and chastisements of elites, even when the policies he puts forward will make their lives more precarious. He follows the logic of market humans to let surplus populations go—those marked as other because poor or sick, or because of their racial, ethnic, gender, or sexual identities—but in the process also serves up his followers.

In short, Trump is the personification of the market human as individual entrepreneur who transcends the state, but nevertheless seeks the benefits of economic and policing security. As a wealthy individual he can purchase services not provided by government welfare states, while at the same time he can personally profit from governmental outsourcing and corporate welfare. Yet his entire presidential platform uses the disciplinary techniques of the state, such as the military, to generate a free-floating and yet racially and ethnically coded nationalism as provision of greater security—this while capital can flow freely. My analysis of entrepreneurs as subjects of action helps explain the production of dispossessed market humans who are guided more by their orientation to capital and security ("build the wall," "lock her up") than by any other subjectivity they may live, including their own economic dispossession.

In the process, we can even imagine the dispossessed as part of a risk calculus for human-made natural disasters, such as populations who perversely "choose" to die because they are too poor to pay innovatively and flexibly for their healthcare. Population unrest could even become the next formal site of financial speculation, reconfiguring humans through market

mechanisms as speculative instruments—social upheaval bonds?—for entrepreneurial innovation and monetization. While this may sound fantastical, I address in the next chapter another instrumental horror, the reconfiguration of the cultural human as a being with culture that has utility, an instance of subject formations being repurposed for the market to decide the life worth living. I look at how culture, what Raymond Williams called the "structure of feeling" for forming inchoate human beings external to state and market, actually functions through market mechanisms; cultural discourse works like an economic transaction. The cultural human serves to establish a hierarchy of beings based on usefulness or uselessness—all reified by the epistemological technology of statistics. This chapter begins an excursus pursued over the next three chapters outlining the necessity for thinking agency differently from humanism's sovereign subjectivity, as I have outlined here with respect to the market human.

CHAPTER 2

Utilitarian Humanism

"We Other Humans" Regulated by Culture

The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), much like the UN itself, is an institution patently committed to the Enlightenment project and the Kantian analytic. Interestingly enough, it emerged after World War II, in the European ruins of Enlightenment thinking. Although lacking any overarching global legal authority because no such institutions exist,[1] UNESCO is one of the primary institutions concerned with major and minor cultures, as well as with human knowledge in the present. Fostering a global project of cultural preservation through its World Heritage Sites program, UNESCO upholds culture as a strategy for struggling with rapacious economic, political, and social forces that destroy human environments as well as humans themselves.[2] Near the end of the last millennium, UNESCO published the *World Culture Report 1998: Culture, Creativity and Markets* and the *World Culture Report 2000: Cultural Diversity, Conflict and Pluralism* as a service to uphold concepts of universal humanity.[3] The World Culture Reports include contributions from academics, activists, policy analysts, global actors (literally, such as Gong Li), and well-known critics and cultural theorists in the Euro-American context (Homi Bhabha, Arturo Escobar, Wendy Harcourt, Arjun

Appadurai, George Yudice, Nestor Canclini, Anthony Giddens, and Nancy Fraser).[4] Both Reports comprise a plurality of perspectives, from humanistic theorists, social scientists, "hard" scientists, economists, and ecologists, who contributed to the Reports because of common care for the persistence of various "living interactive cultures," as proclaimed in the 1998 Report devoted to the trinity of "Culture, Creativity and Markets."

The World Culture Reports (WCRs) were produced during a moment of representational crisis in the wake of the disintegration of the Cold War's bipolar order of power. Assaults on epistemic coherence were seen on several fronts: Globalization as discourse had been rediscovered and was all the rage; coherent local and global civil societies were in crisis due to labor and immigration flows and the collapse of the Soviet Union, and liberalist anti-statism abounded; populations were becoming cynical about representational democracy as they watched jobs shipped overseas, their unions further eviscerated, and the generalized intensification of financial and neoliberal capital; and bioethical concerns intensified with the cloning of Dolly the sheep. UNESCO sought to recuperate the transcendental of "culture" as an object of knowledge at a moment when concepts of life, particularly human life, were being challenged through biotechnology and genetic engineering and the inchoate reconfiguration of the economic order away from labor and the production of commodities toward securities and derivatives. The WCRs argue for rethinking the category of life through a stable conduct of existence such as culture, privileging human life over all other forms. Culture seems to operate as the primary glue for human organization, the fundamental mode for measuring what humans are—their mode of being. As a result, UNESCO exhibits an epistemological "will to anthropologize" forces, techniques, strategies, and functions that often frustrate representation and the limits of knowledge. Anthropomorphism allows UNESCO to enframe life within culture, with local or particular variations understood as cultural difference, while maintaining the universal concept of culture to differentiate human life from forms of nonhuman life. (Animals appear for UNESCO as integrated elements of the ecological environment, with status similar to that of objects for Aristotle or machinic beasts for Descartes, rather than as autonomous unto themselves.) For UNESCO, humans need culture not only to shore up the human against epistemological challenges to concepts of life, but also to offer an alternative—universal humanity—to the utilitarian concerns of the market and information technocracy, which replace the universal human as the central representation of the world system.

The WCRs play a minor role within the project of reclaiming universal humanity via anthropologization. Cultural differences (specific cultures), recognized as subsets of a larger species identity (universal humanity), can be reconciled through dialectical synthesis of local cultures within universal humanity. This culminates in a global human system that can accommodate the becoming-market of the human in the manner I argued in the last chapter. The category of the global (or universal) human mixes biological and economic discourses, namely evolutionary and economic developmental horizons and a pragmatic concern for utility, or the addition of value, to create what I call *utilitarian humanism*. Like the market human who becomes human through market integration, utilitarian humanism generates a naturalized form of value for the human identified through culture: Humans become human when they are recognized within a particularistic manifestation of culture. Developed by Jeremy Bentham and his disciple John Stuart Mill, utilitarianism began as a secular moral philosophy in Great Britain committed to understanding why certain things happen at the level of the organizational unit of society, with the goal of itemizing those practices and events in order to maximize benefits, referred to as "the moral good," and minimize human pain. The moral practices of utilitarianism—lessening pain, promoting human good—can be and have been easily colonized by capital, which replaces human pleasure and pain with immediate profit or market potential (capital in reserve) as the driving motor of the system. Utilitarian humanism, I contend, deploys functionalist concepts of culture that are indebted to modernization, development theory, and neoliberal economics, and it is underwritten by liberalist political theory. It captures forms of human and nonhuman life and enframes the possibilities for thinking life otherwise.

Throughout this chapter, I presume that there are many forms of life, cultures, and humans and potentially many "humanisms." I tease out whether Foucault's by now famous statement in *Les mots et les choses* concerning the "death of man" as a historical figure suggests dispensing with humanism *tout court* amid the proliferation of cultural difference, though humanism still unites humans when compared to nonhuman species. As I discussed in the introduction, the concept of universality and the Euro-American faith in "universal humanity" has been rightfully critiqued by scholars of feminist, postcolonial, and cultural studies, and by Marxist, postmodernist, posthumanist, and deconstructivist critics for its process of homogenizing and incorporating cultural difference. Nevertheless, I question whether the leveling effects of culture in organizing collectivities have been as thoroughly scrutinized or challenged. Even when conceived as a

dynamic and creative process and not as a fixed object/subject, culture may offer a strategy of coherence amid the flows of polysemous meanings and practices of human life that ironically constrains as much as it liberates through heterogeneous practices. As a result, I critique a strain of humanism, premised on identity and speciesism but formalized as "culture," that results in the promulgation of "useful humans" through a strategy of containment. I posit, therefore, that the concept *culture* may be used for simultaneously constructing universal humanity and cultural difference, offering new territories of knowledge production that never question the "givenness" of culture. In a manner similar to that suggested in my discussion of the morality of markets in the last chapter, there emerges an almost theological belief in the good of culture as a form of redemption that can unite leftist intellectuals, "disinterested" scientists, and realist political theorists through a common faith in the concept of the human as species who thinks difference through manifestations of cultural difference.[5] The heinous incarnations of civilizational discourse deployed by political realists, such as Samuel Huntington's "clash of civilizations" thesis—now rebranded by Donald Trump through the slogan "Make America Great Again" and through his promise to build walls, literally and figuratively, to "secure" the nation—demonstrate how racial, ethnic, and cultural hatreds, as in Bosnia, Rwanda, Kosovo, Iraq, Syria, Libya, Sudan, and toward minorities and immigrants to the United States, mobilize a localized universalism to suggest the righteousness of a free-floating alliance of expedience called "civilization." Civilizational discourse relies, nonetheless, on the ground of culture, on the "givenness" of cultural difference as the mode for organizing life and human multiplicities—whether this discourse be that of figures such as Huntington and Trump or that of cultural theorists, even oppositional ones housed in universities. I will examine each position in turn and contend that they may be more closely aligned than appears, even if their ends and means are different. Both camps argue for a renewed Platonic idea (*eidos*) represented through the stabilizing force of universal humanity, implying a resolute form of the species as the ontological fact of the human, while deploying localized culture or civilization as its historical and epistemological variations. Conceiving the Platonic universal human entombs quivering beings in the narrative of the global human system, and elides a radically historical and persistent construction of affective ahuman beings in the dynamics of time. In other word, culture is captured to mark useful humans, while letting others, unrecognized by categories of utility, become expendable, a situation we see all too often with regard to refugees in a global context.

We Other Humans: Culture as a Regulatory System

In its founding constitution UNESCO does not mince words concerning its goals of standardizing and universalizing ways of thinking to maintain global order and coherence:

> Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed. . . . A peace based exclusively upon the political and economic arrangements of governments would not be a peace which could secure the unanimous, lasting and sincere support of the peoples of the world, and the peace must therefore be founded, if it is not to fail, upon the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind.[6]

Notwithstanding the gendered construction of this purported universal, all practices must render the human a transparent object of reflection, intelligible as a reflection of the larger "mankind." Consequently, UNESCO aspires to normalize many of the criteria of the human through proper education, legitimate knowledge, and the diffusion of culture "in the unrestricted pursuit of objective truth and in the free exchange of ideas and knowledge" ("Constitution"). As previously discussed, Michel Foucault describes political processes that flow throughout the social field as techniques of governmentality, his term for an art or style of nonstatist governing of people and things. In the process, governmentality determines the limit of the possible, operating as a system of management that creates and permeates the formation of knowledge. As I discussed in the last chapter on market humans, and contrary to what Jurgen Habermas and the Hegelian Rechtsphilosophie tradition purport, governing need not have the state apparatus or constitutionalism as its final goal. The sovereign protection of territory or property through law or rules is only one manner of exercising power and control. Instead, the establishment of norms actually *creates* populations, even transnational diasporic populations, that can be taxed and disciplined. Processes of management and governance, disconnected from the historical hegemony of nation-states and other kinds of states, can manage concepts of human life, defining the very limits of what is recognized as human, with respect to populations that are not territorially bound. The capacity to manage risk becomes a tell-tale sign of human subjectivity, limiting the realm of available knowledge or information regarding the possibilities of subjectivity, and predetermining the search for truth about humans. These are governmental or biopolitical forms of judgment, where power takes hold of life.[7] Building on my analysis of market humans in the

last chapter, I argue that culture mixed with market optimization can be such a governmental technique.

UNESCO indicates its desire for governing populations through the objective truth of culture—a set of human truths that are universal and specific to all humans—which can only be disseminated through education and global institutions like itself. Frederico Mayor, the director-general of UNESCO, describes at the beginning of the 1998 WCR:

> Culture shapes the way we see the world. It therefore has the capacity to bring about the change of attitudes needed to ensure peace and sustainable development which, we know, form the only possible way forward for life on planet Earth. A global crisis faces humanity at the dawn of the twenty-first century, marked by increasing poverty in our asymmetrical world, environmental degradation and short-sightedness in policy-making. Culture is a crucial key to solving this crisis. (i)

Mayor's statement repeats most of the major Eurocentric mantras of modernity that emerged from localized conditions—say, Kant walking in Konigsberg—and have been universalized for the formation of the universal technique of culture. By intersecting and traversing different political and economic formations, culture provides a way, for Mayor, of reconciling economic issues, such as profit potential and the distribution of resources in an "asymmetrical world," and it provides the conditions of possibility for preserving "life on planet Earth." The asymmetrical world of nation-states (power) can formulate cultural blocs for rational worldviews to train the ways "we" humans "see the world." At the same time, cultural blocs devise certain mechanisms of localized pride among unforeseen "global," and, in the spirit of neoliberalism, "natural" economic consequences, such as ecological devastation and the rational but unequal international division of labor. UNESCO's statement shows, therefore, how the local and the global, and the economic, political, social, and cultural, intermesh when managing or governing humans. Yet there seems to be a dialectic mediating the two poles that can only be sublimated in the local/global nexus, offering a motif from the Romantic and Enlightenment traditions about the nature of synthesis around an identity.[8] That identity is always already cultural. Cultural information facilitates the integration of disparate subsystems of human specificity—recognized through the horizons of localized culture, language, and history—into the common language of the universal human. Local cultures can thrive while still adhering to the universal of "peace and sustainable development which, *we know*, form the only possible way forward for life on planet Earth," led by

effective "policy-making." According to Mayor, by overcoming the false consciousness of "short-sightedness in policy-making," a more "human human," a synthesis of local culture and the universal species, can be created and led by UNESCO to enlightenment through the righteous binding of culture and the stable epistemological order of the global human system. The idea of class consciousness is a general line used by Marxists to build solidarity for humans as a transnational class to effect social change. Drawing from Marxism but without the rigorous critique, Mayor and UNESCO advocate instead for a "cultural consciousness" as a regulatory system for governing humans.

Culture offers a governmental mode of management to police any potential crisis threatening the system, and simultaneously restores equilibrium for global humanity. Mayor's concept of culture is like a form of self-consciousness among individuals: "Complex systems draw their strength from diversity: genetic diversity in a species, biological diversity in human communities. Each culture constitutes a unique mode of interpreting or relating to a world so complex that the only hope of knowing it or dealing with it is to approach it from as many perspectives as possible" (WCR 1998, i). While *cultures* in the plural—Mayor's "as many perspectives as possible"—give the frame justification for its complexity, they simultaneously, like the famous Magritte paintings, create mini-frames of complex forms of life within the human frame. To be human entails, therefore, that one has a culture—"a unique mode of interpreting or relating to a world." This cultural human forms a particularist consciousness as the unfolding of the individual manifestation of the human, measured by subjectivity, language, territory, and history, in order to recognize a self as a subject within the larger species continuum. Diversity of human communities is measured thereby through the sustainability of culture in relationship to the human ("a complex system"). Culture mixes mechanistic/functionalist desires, moral techniques, and governmental operations for properly acculturated humans to ensure—as UNESCO says—peace and "sustainable development" as the sign of progress. Differences of culture and identity are consequently integrated into a larger organic and biological structure, organized at the level of the species, the global market human.[9]

Systematic worldwide analysis of culture will lead to the synthesis of "greater truths" about humans ontologically, as a species, as a complex organism, although UNESCO obviously does not want to speculate on its governmental role in policing these truths.[10] UNESCO argues, instead, for a Kantian concept of humanity not as it is but as it should be, always having to negotiate between animality and a pure rational and accountable

"personality." However, the WCRs take stock of the present—like Diderot's *Encyclopedia*—without addressing how cultural cataloguing itself could have a normative function in establishing representational statistics as human ontology. Armed less with speculative analysis of the possible effects of market globalization on culture, the WCRs accumulate forms of knowledge and human practices through quantitative mechanisms that could, for example, facilitate capital accumulation or manage risk, creating a universal human cultural archive.

The global knowledge archive can accommodate the human kaleidoscope of different political positions and the disciplines of social scientists, economists, policy analysts, and even cultural critics. Scattered throughout the 1998 and 2000 World Culture Reports are charts and graphs measuring and quantifying cultural values, which suggests that all forms of human life can be rendered intelligible through the epistemological certitude of statistical analysis, including the number of fax machines per 10,000 people, and televisions per 1,000, to measure communication flow.[11] Both the 1998 and 2000 studies end with sections of cultural quantification under the title "Statistical Tables and Cultural Indicators."[12] Particular forms of knowledge will stand in for cultural practices on a geographical horizon, quantifying human practices and sensations and establishing a form of equivalence even for affect. For example, the first graph in the 1998 WCR offers a "Trust Index," which surveys the amount of trust that people in specific countries feel they can have of others within their own country and "other" geographies. Through the confessional technique of the survey, UNESCO can apparently culturally specify and statistically quantify such affective relations as trust, suggesting that statistics can measure even evanescent "interior" practices—human souls—within specific geographies. Trust, an affective relationship conducive to market exchange, is presumed *carte blanche* to be a universal human trait; indeterminate and unruly human affect must, therefore, become habituated as trust. Deviant local variations from the "high trust ratio" will, as a result, require adjustment to establish transparent regimes for economic development and the management of risk. The human, for UNESCO, becomes the accumulation of data along market categories, an idea now normalized by Silicon Valley corporations, as I have discussed in the introduction and previous chapter.

Through statistical analysis picturing representation as ontology, the WCRs imply a curious universalization of life processes through economic development, despite UNESCO's mandate for preserving the "fruitful diversity of cultures." Nowhere is this more evident than in entombing life within statistics creating a governmental hierarchy, whereby any practice,

cultural or otherwise, must justify itself in relationship to its statistical representation within the World Culture Reports. Aberrations from the statistical analysis are encouraged to reform themselves to return to the statistical certainty of the United Nations' global imprimatur. Such sorting of aberrant practices could often lead, ironically, to circular arguments about authentic knowledge by, for example, religious and political fundamentalists. Even the most statistically defined cultural practices, such as nationalism and patriotism, would need to reassert their claims to authenticity and renewal. Indeed, the recent growing national and regional trends of "Fortress England," "Fortress Europe," and "Fortress America" seem to demonstrate these practices in horrific fashion.

The statistics may expedite a form of "cultural natural selection" or "survival of the statistically fit/correct" through sustained development of ever-more-meticulous statistical analysis. The epistemological norm of culture takes on an ontological quality due to a certain nominalism of origins and telos through statistics, a process that reductively grasps representation and epistemology as the final limit of analysis. Culture relies on a set of mutually accepted and institutionalized protocols, Williams' "structure of feeling," in order to take particular forms and practices as exhibiting the work of cultures, giving representation or form to the world. To believe in cultures suggests the need to take for granted the predetermined state of the world or universe as a form, whereby cultures are subsets of a larger species. To use Heideggerian language by way of Kant, the agent presumes the frame (*Gestell*) of the world in the production of the world as a picture, with the ability to render the world as an object of reflection.[13] As Heidegger acknowledged, the human is one such frame that is challenged by changes in technology; the human sciences provide the epistemological material to fill the human frame with a coherent picture (*bild*), while paradoxically also unraveling the human's field of experience in the world through technological standardization.[14] The human differentiates itself from animals and other forms of life by being thrown into a particular culture and acquiring the specific national language of its community to communicate with others in this community. This creates a horizon for thinking the species ontologically as beings within a culture. Humans cannot be without cultures to inhabit, as the expression of this being. However, the reduction of human ontology to its statistical representation by UNESCO's recognized cultural processes creates a statistical being. Life not only becomes statistical, but also enframed within the epistemological schema of human mathematical knowledge organized along market biases.

The World Culture Reports measure culture through normalizing human practices that are useful, calculating thereby in a self-sustaining fashion the limits of life—human and otherwise—through rationalized culture. The WCRs define forms of life within particular geographies, and bestow intelligibility on disparate political and economic practices that become the mythological origin of global market humans as useful objects. Utility becomes, I contend, the moral and ethical register for recognizing humans as having use and exchange value, which suggests the need to consider the moral and ethical legacy of utilitarianism. Jeremy Bentham's and John Stuart Mill's moral philosophy of utilitarianism offers an important corrective to the transcendent scope of Kantian ethics and the hope of the categorical imperative—act as if your actions were universal.[15] Instead of positing a set of transcendent, guiding moral principles and duties humans naturally have and/or follow, utilitarianism proposes an immanent and historical model of "means," with the understanding that eventually human ethics will be universalized through equalization ("ends"). Indeed, utility acknowledges a radical temporality and specific historical and immanent conditions for establishing or thinking utility as "a theory of life on which this theory of morality is grounded."[16] For utilitarianism, happiness is the sole end of all human action at once limited and unlimited, individualizing and massifying. To understand human ends, Bentham proposed the "greatest happiness principle" to shore up "good" human practices in defining utility: "that property in any object, whereby it tends to produce benefit, advantage, pleasure, good, or happiness . . . or . . . to prevent the happening of mischief, pain, evil, or unhappiness."[17] Mill would offer a more precise if similarly ambiguous definition: "Utility, or the Greatest Happiness Principle, holds that actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness, wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness. By happiness is intended pleasure and the absence of pain; by unhappiness, pain, and the privation of pleasure."[18] Utilitarianism was invested in the idea of creating subjects through character, of establishing a common consensus or notion of what pleasure and thereby happiness could encompass by what was rendered visible. Mill wrote:

> [U]tility would enjoin, first, that laws and social arrangements should place the happiness, or (as speaking practically it may be called) the interest, of every individual, as nearly as possible in harmony with the interest of the whole; and secondly, that education and opinion, which have so vast a power over human character, should so use that power as to establish in the mind of every individual an indissoluble association

> between his own happiness and the good of the whole; especially between his own happiness and the practice of such modes of conduct, negative and positive, as regard for the universal happiness prescribes. . . . [A] direct impulse to promote the general good may be in every individual one of the habitual modes of action.[19]

Rather than a virtual theological *a priori* on the good or overarching principles (moral law) of Kantian ethics, utilitarianism indicates a historical process to establish useful principles of happiness through the standardization of character rendered within the sensible world. Any notion of incoherent force or power in effectuating this character would seemingly be evacuated due to a normative claim to democratic or equalizing desires in establishing the universal character of utility through acts and beliefs made manifest and true. Karl Marx in *Capital*, volume 1, acknowledged the universalizing danger of utilitarianism in describing Bentham: "If I had the courage of my friend Heinrich Heine, I should call Mr. Jeremy a genius by way of bourgeois stupidity. . . . With the driest naiveté he assumes that the modern petty bourgeois, especially the English petty bourgeois, is the normal man. Whatever is useful to this peculiar kind of normal man, and to his world, is useful in and for itself. He applies this yardstick to the past, the present and the future."[20] Marx identifies Bentham's establishment of universals in time and from specific practices of the bourgeois Englishman that are then generalized as part and parcel of a universal human condition, what he describes elsewhere as the great civilizing mission of capital in socializing humans. Bentham—whom Foucault once described as more important to the history of philosophy than Kant or Hegel, and whom he depicted as the intellectual of the disciplinary society through the machine of panopticism—normalized humans through the production of souls as a mechanism of power that straddles the visible and invisible worlds.[21]

UNESCO proposes a more recent incarnation of these techniques by conceiving human life ontologically through utilitarian mechanisms of usefulness and by maximizing happiness for market humans, as I discussed in the previous chapter with respect to Gramsci and Foucault and *homo oeconomicus*, whereby economic humans are humans *tout court*. The market human is knowable through its ability to generate value for the marketplace, or in other words through its capacity to generate value by recognizing humans as entrepreneurial being, innovation *in potential*, or as useful managers of risk.[22] Specific cultures may enter into "being human" only when they add value for the market, when their members work efficiently as market humans. In short, forms of human culture exist because of a

pragmatic value. Rather than existing as arbitrary and contingent variables of humans who connect to an inherent or universal being, cultures demonstrate their value because they have "proven" to be effective, just, or ethical. Needless to say, this is not an ontological fact of being human, but the naturalization of a regime of value as ontology, whereby humans have being or life when they represent value. Adding value marks the limit of humanity, when the object of the idea is immediate profit or futural asset, a danger of what I call utilitarian humanism. This is my central claim: While commodities were once objects of utility deployed by humans, now human practices and traditions offer a similar scale of use for *humans as commodities (both as subjects and objects)* to "sustain development."[23] Human actions or creations, as well as humans in their very ontology, could offer for UNESCO a virtually limitless production of new forms of sustainable subjectivities within the generalized structure of the market human. UNESCO's WCRs respond to nonhuman forces of globalization in the economy and statecraft by reasserting an ontological notion of the human as utilitarian.[24] In the process, as I will elaborate in subsequent chapters, the human is increasingly conceived as a being of capital for the extrapolating of surplus value and the honoring of debts. In this way, humans and cultures act like commodities, but also like futural assets that can be aligned with the biases and goals of financialization.

Through my engagement with the WCRs and diagnosis of the dangers of life conceived as utility, I want to stress how culture may be not only a site of resistance, self-reflection, and form of being, but an epistemological system of identification and containment in creating the global human as utilitarian, thereby useful for the market. Despite the use of such terms as *creative diversity* and *pluralism*, culture is seen as having value and use for maximizing happiness and pleasure and reducing pain, as creating a system of organization to expedite those regimes of value, while offering the performance of emancipation within categories of use. The specific attributes of the particular culture, race, or ethnicity, however, are less important than their contributions to, their value for, understanding the "total human system" recognized through cultural and human attributes with utilitarian market value. Specific cultural formations can then heighten the efficiency of the market human system. A utilitarian humanism emerges from "a reserve of knowledge and experience about good and useful ways of doing things" (WCR 1998,18). To summarize up to this point: Utilitarian humanism can be identified via two separate principles: *1. A useful and productive human will have culture. 2. Certain cultures are more useful than others; therefore, cultures of expedience should thrive because they are fungible assets.*

Utilitarian humanism may operate, thereby, in governmental fashion, deciding the limits of the community. Instead of the citizen, state, culture, or nation, the very limit of the species and life becomes the governmental horizon of judgment. Giorgio Agamben in *Homo Sacer* uses the work of Michel Foucault on biopower to argue convincingly that the sovereign decision of who or what can be regarded as a form of life that is protected by the law (in the community or *nomos*) is reconfigured to define what a human is and can be, where life exists.[25] For Agamben "naked life" is "life that can be killed but not sacrificed." Agemben reads life through the biological functions of the species, as still predifferentiated energy, unrecognized through humanist or Enlightenment political categories and therefore unprotected by classical political theory and legal mechanisms.[26] His diagnosis indicates how naked life resides in a zone of indistinction, permitting the potential for new forms of politicization or forms of life that can be executed, tortured, or merely allowed to die shorn of any legal recourse. Borrowing from Foucault, Agemben describes how certain forms of life are made to live and others allowed to die. In contradistinction to trauma and abjection theorists on life such as Judith Butler, Agamben maintains that not all naked life exists *de facto* in a state of abjection. He does not claim that naked life is merely expendable and needs to be reformed into classical political categories, such as liberal democracy. Naked life neither resides in a politicized category of the human nor as a marker of democracy, republicanism, socialism, or totalitarianism, but stands in for energy or potentialities—acategorical thinking for possibilities of life. Agamben's naked life is corollary to what I called in my introduction the *ahuman*, existence before it is disciplined into form and matter, including the human species itself.

Nevertheless, though it is unrecognized through cultural or political modes of life, naked life may be captured for practices deemed useful, which is the new measure of (sustainable) happiness for all life. Indeed, could culture, as a free-floating mechanism of value-measurement that describes a purportedly human way of life, be rendered an attribute enabling the market to judge certain populations as life "worth living," and others, unrecognized through cultural or utilitarian categories, as not quite living, or the unliving? UNESCO exemplifies one institution that may, wittingly or unwittingly, render such "governmental" decisions on what life is worth living, and turn naked life, unrecognized as cultural or useful, into expendable life. Naked life could shuffle between a form of value, life worth living, and a mode of existence that must reform itself into useful cultural classifications or die, but never exists as a mode without value measured culturally

in *potentia* or in reserve.[27] UNESCO's utilitarian humanism, by establishing a certain ontic faith in culture, innocently decides who lives and dies in the market human system, as I discussed in the last chapter. How might cultural critics and theorists, witting or unwitting, contribute to this project that reasserts market categories and further solidifies economic ontology?

UNESCO's exemplary faith in consensus, legitimation, and the debate of reason relies on habitual strategies for conceptualizing cultures as benevolent systems of utilitarian management for cultivating humans and establishing continuity between past, present, and future. In the 2000 WCR, for example, Arjun Appadurai and Katerina Stenou argue for "sustainable pluralism" within nation-states and across and among states: "Sustainable pluralism thus defines a situation in which a finite number of culturally diverse groups are organized to relate so that each has maximum opportunity to reproduce its identity and to evolve creatively over time."[28] Different identities, races, and ethnicities can turn into objects of knowledge that eventually are made "knowable" through the tracking of different cultural identities and histories, and deposited into the archive of knowledge to facilitate what Appadurai and Stenou call the "political economy of dignity." By multiplying possibilities for the imagination and the capacities of "art as an archive of possible forms," the political economy of dignity—a cost-benefit analysis tracking dignity and modeled on modernization theory—will flourish.[29] Specific members of each race and ethnicity should, thereby, maintain visibility by creating an archive that can be rendered knowable, a cultural history and knowledge that has been pre-scripted for them by their forebears. In the process, the human strives to be objectified in order to traffic in the political archive of dignity. This mode of synthesis, of human as object, even though pluralistic may nevertheless recognize differences only by their relationship to the cultural whole (how they differ from cultural identities, subjectivities, or forms of knowledge) or by language ("maximum opportunities" for culture to achieve the "political economy of dignity"), which indicates a problem with agency conceived through subjectivity. The human as object provides the mechanism for visibility and, ironically, the capacity to be reified ultimately as an object by capital, a point I critiqued at length with regard to the market human and will address in the next chapter with respect to reification and object-oriented ontology. By the same token, going beyond Appadurai and Stenou's cultural differences, by investing in the subjectivity of the human as one form of subjectivity among many, including a subjectivity of objects, animal subjects, or an environmental subjectivity of eco-being, the human gets reduced to a biological subjectivity of the

human species as a whole, a type of market human system. In other words, forms of culture-practice and knowledge emerge through the synthesis of disparate elements around a subjectivity that repeats and becomes institutionalized as an object of knowledge or a sustainable subject, a dangerous effect of which is what I call utilitarian humanism.

Attractive slogans such as "sustainable development," "sustainable pluralism" or Appadurai's other arguments for "globalization from below" need to be questioned with respect to their techniques of incorporation to avoid becoming slogans that merely reassert hegemonic articulations of power. If humans can achieve self-consciousness (in themselves and for themselves) only through culture, they could realize themselves emerging as culture in reserve: as "utilitarian humans." Such humans are forms of life that are worth living because they follow the market or cultural consensus of utilitarian humanism. "Other" humans are expendable, but they must not be sacrificed callously; that would be a waste. Rather, the market and cultural consensus adjudicate biopolitical decisions, making "humanitarian" gestures inviting cultural humans to contribute through creatively demonstrating how their culture has value to the tourism industries, even if this entails bringing about conditions that will result in their being killed slowly and systematically, even if their development is sustained. I address this issue directly in chapter 4. In a similar vein, life that is not defined along UNESCO's humanistic or cultural frame could be "made to die," as I discussed in the last chapter around subjectivities who fail to manage risk. The market and global institutions, often armed with righteous intentions, exercise decisions regarding who lives or dies, and produce populations that are expendable because they have not sufficiently adapted to the market human consensus. Armed with a self-righteous benevolence that does not acknowledge its technical prowess in killing without sacrificing in Agamben's sense, UNESCO and the United Nations can label other cultural practices as inefficient at best—or can construe them as terrorist, antagonistic, and/or enslaving because of their incompatibility with the cultural whole. In the process, despite claims and calls for openness, adaptability, pluralism, and so forth, UNESCO increasingly polices the human community, regulating and extirpating any disturbance in the utilitarian image of the human it institutionalizes as "cultural."

On the Uses and Abuses of Humans

The concept of culture as a form of programming has been a useful tool for the nation-state historically in organizing and arranging life within intel-

ligible patterns. Nevertheless, the nation-state is in open competition with other forces of capital and power for monopolizing force in organizing collectivities and pluralistic societies. Romantic notions of culture and Enlightenment concepts of liberal democracy can easily be transferred from the nation-state's goal of producing citizen-subjects to the production of market humans, as I discussed in chapter 1, or of utilitarian humans, available to and for the market. Democracy, for example, is frequently rebranded as a new civilizational discourse to legitimize invasion and colonization in the present in the name of liberating populations abroad to bring them into the Anglosphere of political neoconservatism and economic neoliberalism. Specific races, ethnicities, and languages can then be cast as friction, accountable for any disturbances within the market human system. In Samuel Huntington's *Clash of Civilizations* (1996), Islamicism and Confucianism play the role of terrorist threat to the universal "we," a cultural negation against which to portray the American-European way of life. His text appeared at a moment of emerging bourgeoisies throughout East Asia and the Middle East, as well as proliferating multicultural populations within the Euro-Americas. In his most recent book, *Who Are We? The Challenges to American National Identity* (2005), Huntington provides a familiar enemy lurking within the United States, challenging its national identity and cultural and political authenticity: Mexican immigrants, promulgating a clandestine *reconquista* of the southwestern United States. Huntington worries that there will be a war of attrition between Anglo-Protestant/Anglo-Saxon culture and what he insinuates is the primary threat to it: Spanish-speaking, Catholic, Hispanic hordes from south of the border ready to seize the common core or "soul" of America.[30]

Huntington's argument recasts the "clash of civilizations" within U.S. borders by arguing, as so many others before him, for primordial connection to territory and a renewal of American cultural values and identities, focused on a unified and expedient Anglo-Protestant heritage.[31] According to Huntington, politics and states no longer matter because cultures are the only alternative to liberal democracy and neoliberalism: "September 11 dramatically symbolized the end of the twentieth century of ideology and ideological conflict, and the beginning of a new era in which people define themselves primarily in terms of culture and religion. The real and potential enemies of the United States now are religiously driven militant Islam and entirely nonideological Chinese nationalism." Militant Islam and non-United States cultural nationalism seemingly are the greatest threat to the integrity of U.S. world dominance both at home and abroad. For Huntington's social Darwinism—natural selection read through culture—cultures

cannot coexist within specific territories. A "cultural survival of the fittest" emerges for him due to a finite amount of resources and a Malthusian fear of population flows. As a result, in his view Anglo-Protestantism, literally to save its political legacy from extinction, will need to revitalize itself by vanquishing others who threaten it.[32] This political legacy he calls the American Creed—"liberty, equality, democracy, civil rights, nondiscrimination, rule of law."[33] In Huntington's cultural zero-sum game, a clash of civilizations through competing cultural dominants in the United States will dissipate the political order of liberal democracy; therefore, "A multicultural America will, in time, become a multicreedal America, with different groups with different cultures espousing political values and principles rooted in their particular cultures."[34] Multiculturalism in the United States is, consequently, a tacit threat because it hinders the efficiency of "Western Enlightenment" identity consolidation and suggests a multipolar and pluralistic universe. Huntington deploys such debates, however, because of a belief in culture and its local territorial differences read through deterministic theories of race, culture, and ethnicity indissolubly linked to political formation. Huntington's political realism argues for the utility of highly coded and "represented" cultures because they provide transparent mechanisms for cultural subjectivity in order to manage humans. Identity politics writ large onto the order of nation-states expedites these systems of management. The Trump administration appears to hew closely to Huntington's worldview.

Here is the paradox: Huntington, now echoed by Trump, claims that world politics will no longer be driven primarily by economic, political, or ideological attempts to speak for universal humanity; instead, there will be pluralism, with different cultural takes on reading the world. "Liberty, equality, democracy, civil rights, nondiscrimination, rule of law" are reconfigured by Huntington as European localisms that can no longer conceive of themselves as universal. The historical struggles of capitalism versus communism, struggles for power between sovereign nation-states, or between "social classes, rich and poor, or other economically defined groups" fomenting strife in the world will, instead, be organized at the local or regional level of "cultures" and "civilizations," read through religion. Liberal democracy's tolerance, its acceptance of cultural difference, serves to legitimate the very political and economic formations Huntington celebrates while simultaneously undermining them, so cultural difference must be managed or extirpated.[35] Like UNESCO, Huntington mixes localism and universality. Anglo-Protestant Americanism is the technically rationalist localism he argues for that should lead the world, for it embodies a utili-

tarian humanism, the pinnacle of liberal market capitalism. Broad cultural and religious localisms, like Islam and Chinese nationalism (Islamicism and Confucianism from the *Clash of Civilizations*?) challenge this order because they provide alternatives that work quite effectively with capital and states. In the process, Islam and Chinese nationalism also threaten the unmitigated hegemony of U.S. corporate and state forces with respect to the meaning, understanding, and projection of global market humanity. (Incidentally, Muslims and Chinese are also two substantial cultural, religious, and ethnic populations that actually reside in England and the United States, Huntington's civilizational Anglosphere.) Nevertheless, cultural localism, autonomy, or the self-determination of culture does not seem to have stopped the United States' global extension of military bases. Why then are such arguments viewed as politically strident on U.S. territory?

Huntington's thesis has been critiqued and potentially debunked by providing alternative evidence to challenge his reductive characterization of culture, yet the concept of "cultural localism" as a corrective to universal humanity may remain entrenched and unthought. In fact, Huntington's American exceptionalism theories have a zombielike afterlife as the ideological justification for Donald Trump's evangelical Christian Fortress America. Trump celebrates America as the indispensable nation, employing a discourse of perpetual decline that can only be reversed through a Christian/Anglo-Saxon purification of the United States for native-born subjects. The United States must look inward to renew itself, to ready itself to do battle with Islamic and Hispanic hordes who penetrate the sovereign borders and would take America for themselves. Meanwhile Trump argues for protecting American corporations and development resources for economically strapped white populations by removing governmental protections, so that the market can be unleashed to make America "great again"—even though the market has already made many of his supporters' lives ever more precarious. Pluralistic celebrations of cultural difference can still retain the logic of cultural and religious blocs, which can be mobilized conceptually by fundamentalists like Trump to justify a zero-sum war of cultural and economic resources. Cultural and religious blocs provide a commonsensical and useful theory for explaining difference without altering the structure of power too radically. The status of culture as a given, whether sustainable and open to absorbing "new differences" or not, facilitates these techniques, conferring continuity between peoples who adhere to and inherit a similar history.

While there has been considerable important, provocative, and therapeutic analysis of the contingent and shifting meanings of culture, identities,

subjectivities, and spaces, I contend that the "givenness" of culture as a pure fact of the human has not received the same level of interrogation. Culture fulfills a need for a system of organization, while appearing to be outside the state's domineering apparatus, and thus works seamlessly with neoliberalism's goals of anti-statism. Humans use a vehicle of communication, language, that has not been miraculously passed down to them, but institutionalized by a domineering force such as a state; they may use language, paradoxically, as a means to resist statism, to use the market logic I have outlined above. The culturally determined imagined community of linguistically similar peoples is disciplined, however, not only by the normalizing mechanisms of the state, but also by the cultural technologies of the community and market. A configuration of power from below, such as language, or the vernacular community, may also create a mythical position external to an official national narrative, colonial regime, or state, while making only slight alterations to the state form for the "other" or "new" cultural configuration. Foucault warned of discourses that overvalue the state's managing capabilities by "reducing the state to a certain number of functions, such as the development of productive forces and the reproduction of relations of production, and yet this reductionist vision of the relative importance of the state's role nevertheless invariably renders it absolutely essential as a target needing to be attacked and a privileged position needing to be occupied. . . . [A]fter all, the state is no more than a composite reality and a mythicized abstraction."[36] "Oppositional cultural regimes" may replicate the framework of power against which they struggle by claiming, in political liberalist fashion, a rejection of the state. Culture mythically freed from the state offers merely an alternative management strategy within the arrangement of power that does not push against the frame of power.[37] Consequently, culture conceived as a given way of life or as a style of existence facilitates the production of equivalencies or compatibility by establishing differences and by saving time through a utilitarian structure of recognition for "useful" forms of human life, what I am calling utilitarian humanism.

In rejecting state forces, advocates of culture must also consider the dangers of utilitarian humanism, or they may end up more closely aligned with the logic of Huntington and Trump than they expect. Different "ways of life" are perceived as geographically specific, but they may all share the same conception of culture as a structure of synthesis around an identity, in which differing parts (cultures) relate to the whole (global human system). Culture in this system of thought is a form of programming (like Taylorism, for Gramsci, and biopower, for Foucault), a method of produc-

ing particular human types in a representational and epistemological formation that presents freedom through cultural incorporation. Difference is thus entombed. Capital—as a fluctuating relation of value that tries to codify all relations into equivalencies in its quest to colonize time—follows a similar process, a point that my analysis of the market human thoroughly explicates. The cultural human may operate likewise through utilitarian categories; for example, s/he does not thereby challenge or threaten power or forces of globalization or neoliberal economic orders, but works seamlessly within them, for they expedite the capturing of time. Why? Culture is always already presumed as the work or product of a human subject instead of as a feedback loop between human and nonhuman forces, including the market. In my concluding section, I will extend my work on ahumans and tease out whether agency is perhaps too quickly ascribed to the subject, when in fact that subject may work merely as the conduit for networks of forces, practices, and affective relations that are only retrospectively read onto it. Questioning the givenness of the human *qua* subject may be the place to begin. In contradistinction to automatically assuming a human subject, I propose a network of ahuman forces to suggest the need for new critical strategies of politicization that do not have the subject as their heroic locus of agency.

Ahuman Pluralism

The 1997 Universal Declaration on the Human Genome and Human Rights recognizes the dramatic effect of the genome project for reshaping nature and life; such projects in effect challenge the "givenness" of the single organism of the species as the primary unit for recognizing and organizing life and shift that recognition to the gene, germ line, or catalytic process. Indeed, the givenness of the human figure, its radical distinction from the animal or the technological object, is called into question, as are the measurements for the Enlightenment project of emancipatory human agency. As genetic engineering shows, new forms of life can be created and replicated through technological and informational processes, by recasting phenotypes. Consequently, the epistemological certitude of what Cary Wolfe, after Peter Singer, calls the unquestioned "speciesism" of humanism and cultural studies similarly must be reconsidered; he charges them with "repressing the question of nonhuman subjectivity, taking it for granted that the subject is always already human."[38] Culture and the human are radically historical concepts that have been accepted because of the speciesism that underlies the ethical and political projects of cultural studies and

the culturally utilitarian human that UNESCO presumes. To Wolfe's critique I would add Gayatri Spivak's terminology of "mandatory culturalism": The historicist desire to fix the present relative to the past bestows a coherent agent or determinant on the flux of materiality. The subject is always human, bestowed with a culture, a will, a language, and so forth; the subject represents life. Yet dramatic shifts in biotechnology, bioengineering, and markets suggest that historical concepts of life are themselves being rewritten and reconceived. For how do "we other humans" classify Dolly, the cloned cats and dogs, and the forms of transgenic life—in which genetic material from one species is introduced into another species to create a biological hybrid—that have been since created: as organic machines, or as inorganic members of their respective species? UNESCO responded to the ethical call—the bleat—of the nonhuman other, Dolly, by solidifying the idea of universal human nature (humanity), and, with the Human Genome Project nearing an end of genetic sequencing, formalized a centralized legal declaration in response to these feats of bioengineering through the Universal Declaration on the Human Genome and Human Rights. Its World Culture Reports, explored above, extend this gesture by arguing for the utility of humans, a utilitarian humanism, that restores universal humanity through market humans.

The concept of the human, including its secular incarnations, encounters the stuff of the historical, which dramatically alters its forms of expression and styles. Terry Cochran argues that modernity projects figurations, or figures of thought, to construct worlds and limit the very realm of the possible, including materiality and life itself. Cochran affirms, "Power has an intimate relationship with what I have . . . called figuration or figures of thought, if only because figures embody, refer to, or indicate something else that is not immediately accessible. Whether executive or symbolic, power concerns the capacity to determine, establish, and enforce specific meanings that facilitate or mobilize given worldviews or historical understanding."[39] Cochran diagnoses how tradition, concepts of nature, culture, and the notion of the human subject have a material life affected by fluctuating networks of force, energy, and power that theories of narration, discourse—in short, representational thinking—neglect to consider. Instead, figures become naturalized and centralized, pushing outside the radical contingency of the historical. Discourses and concepts are historical, contingent, arbitrary, constructed, and overturned in the eventfulness of time, rather than being narrative emplotments of time (what Cochran describes, with Walter Benjamin, as the temporal). This description applies, I think, to cultural concepts, discourses, languages, and the subject, and raises the

question whether what is understood as culture represents the anthropocentrism of Enlightenment thinking and its will to value. Culture operates as a regulatory system, simultaneously a space of resistance to the impoverishment of experience and radical contingency, and a representational apparatus of capture to maintain order through value. My analysis of the utilitarian humanism embodied by Huntington's "clash of civilizations" indicates the danger of assuming the givenness of culture as a sop for the production of market humans. Yet biotechnology challenges the given form of the subject (cultural or human) as a framework for thinking life, and forces a rethinking of the flux of time, unmoored from human attempts to structure it into a coherent figuration of narrative or temporality.

To further articulate my claim, derived from Cochran and Wolfe, let us consult one of the earliest theorists of the human subject and the emergence of the concept of secular humanism, Giambattista Vico, from the eighteenth century. Vico reminds us similarly of the processes of the historical function of the human as subject distinct from divine origin to contain time's flux. The first human institutions, for Vico, were the rites of marriage, burial—"*humanitas* in Latin comes first and properly from *humando*, burying"—and the division of the fields, or the formation of property.[40] Ironically, the concept of the human emerges epistemologically from two very different productive operations—birth and death, or emergence and dissipation. The former guides the obsession with understanding human origins, and the procreative function of the species. Death contributes to the concept of the human due to the pervasiveness of corpses and the central belief in human intelligence and the immortality of the human soul:

> The second human institution is burial. . . . This institution is symbolized by a cinerary urn. . . . The urn is inscribed *D.M.*, which means "to the good souls of the dead." This motto represents the common consent of all mankind in the opinion later proved true by Plato, that human souls do not die with their bodies but are immortal.
>
> The urn indicates also the origin among the gentiles of the division of the fields, to which is to be traced the distinction of cities and peoples and finally of nations. (*New Science*, paragraphs 12–13, pp. 8–9)

Vico articulates a connection between "the human" and the act of burial and *memoria* as a function of preserving continuity and ground to keep the memory of the dissolving corpus intact through the notion of a disembodied subject or soul. The Platonic separation between the immortal mind and the evanescent material body that underwrites idealism suggests that

the soul, the subject, becomes the technique by which to create history. The organic relation of the family mediates the evanescence of time by warding off transience and institutionalizing stability through formation of "cities, peoples, and finally of nations." To remember the disarticulated fragments of human action becomes a burden, however, when there are too many corpses occupying the property, which weigh like "a nightmare" on the living and force the continuous act of remembering. This motivates a perpetual quest for new spaces within well-grounded and delimited property of the human subject.[41]

Vico's Platonic argument strives for the "immortality of the soul," an attempt to divine the human to maintain continuity between the past and present and "bury" the ephemeral by producing the idea of immortality through human practices. There is, however, a radical contingency and indeterminacy in Vico because humans make their own history, and therefore the world emerges in their own image: "Because of the indefinite nature of the human mind, wherever it is lost in ignorance man makes himself the measure of all things" (*New Science*, 60). Humans only understand what they know in time and through existence. Vico notes what happens when the world becomes indecipherable or unknown: "It is another property of the human mind that whenever men can form no idea of distant and unknown things, they judge them by what is familiar and at hand" (ibid.). In short, what exceeds human conceptualization and understanding gets referred back to the familiar/habitual, and to what has been archived—hence the movement to maintain the project of subjectivity (soul) as a way to uphold continuity, be it cultural or human. Vico posits in one instance the limits of human understanding in time, as well as differing types of reason due to the finite limits of human intelligences. Humans understand and render transparent the world in their image—what they have created, namely an anthropocentric notion of history, language, and culture within an epistemological framework.[42] Vico offers simultaneously a Platonic faith in reason and the Cartesian mechanism of subjective causality, but he also acknowledges that humans frequently don't understand what they are making—as we may see in such contemporary instances as dark pools of liquidity, hedge funds, atomic bombs, the "clash of civilizations," or, more prosaically, the material stuff of history. He indicates, furthermore, that processes are historical and therefore consistently and persistently produce new practices and forms of thought and life in advance of their conceptualization and verification in observation.[43] They have effects in time without a singular cause or causal connection between relations of force. As a result, the chaos of contingency, indeterminacy, pre-

cariousness, the unpredictability of life and the immanent forces of time are contained within the known world through the representational product of a subject. The historicist Vico provides a circular concept of history that recognizes the flux of time, but does not enframe it within a narrative of continuity through chronological and linear unfolding.[44] Rather he identifies how the subject perhaps captures diverse actions as the work of a human agent. In other words, for Vico life is not entombed as the work of a transcendent subject such as the cultural subject, nationalist subject, market human, or utilitarian humanist; rather, the immanent relationships of life, its dynamic contingency—the human affected by its relationships to objects, events, peoples, histories, institutions and the dynamics of time—emerges in subjects. Life works in the manner of Simondon's pre-individuals and individuations and is marked by effects or loci of processes rather than orchestrating their agency. What I am calling ahumans are those human capturings of life that perpetually change the human in its encounters with life.

As my above analysis of UNESCO and Huntington indicates, culture functions as a kind of epistemological glue, as the Westphalian system of nation-states is reorganized. Numerous voices from across the political spectrum, such as Benjamin Barber, Samuel Huntington, Pheng Cheah and Bruce Robbins, and Arjun Appadurai, have diagnosed how the waning sovereignty of nation-states may create new forms of human organization. Whether speaking of diasporic public spheres (Appadurai), emerging cosmopolitics (Robbins and Cheah), or emerging multitudes or *posses* due to the intensification of empire (Hardt and Negri), these authors have sensed that something has changed since 1989. This change has often gone by the name of globalization. I think financialization, instead, is a more accurate term because of the way financial processes are reorganizing figurations of intelligibility that we see manifest in culture, governance, and forms of subjectivity. While the demise of the nation-state system has been announced countless times—Hannah Arendt, in *the Origins of Totalitarianism*, located its decline in the aftermath of World War I—as have the dangers of the national ethnos for blocking globalization from below (Appadurai), the glue of culture has foreclosed thinking about other forms of human organizing. I have shown how humanitarian organizations, such as UNESCO, conceive culture as a useful fungible asset to be commoditized or held as a standing reserve for possible future monetization. Culture, rather than providing the subject's possible emancipation, leads to incorporation within economic instrumentalities, the most dangerous of which I call utilitarian humanism. At the same time, as Huntington and

Trump demonstrate, the cultural subject marks the limits of civilizational, religious, and selective historical formations, often directed by an unthought Anglo-Protestant centrality. This subject becomes a useful anchor for the most oppressive forces, as exemplified by the heightened nationalism, white supremacy, and symbolic Christianity of the early Trump regime.

What I am arguing for in *Reified Life* is a concept of life freed from the subject—cultural, human, even species-based—as organizing principle, what I am calling the *ahuman*. This is a project that unmoors culture from utility and reification and thinks the radical contingency of existence differently. Life is infinitely more complex than its portrayal by the subjective intellect or the project of epistemology because of the functions of affect, intuition, and instinct (automatic and nonautomatic functions). Guided by the work of Friedrich Nietzsche and Gilles Deleuze, recent scholars of life, including Elizabeth Grosz,[45] Keith Ansell Pearson, and Brian Massumi, and, for differing ends, Wendy Brown and William Connolly, have been arguing that the project of ontology has perhaps too quickly read existence as essence or substance.[46] Massumi and Pearson propose—via William James, albeit very differently—a "radical empiricism" of ontology in time to diagnose the singularity and perpetual emergence and variation of life. All of the above scholars argue in differing ways for thinking what Deleuze calls the *conceptual personae*, an entity that does not presume a human subject or culture, but one in which "thought events," instead, may be traced. Deleuze has traced the *event*, as a radical and indeterminate network of relations in time, in the work of a number of thinkers, most explicitly in Nietzsche via the "will to power," in Bergson through duration and intuition, and in the Stoics in *haecceity*, in which the subject is the effect of the coagulation of often paradoxical thought events. Indeed, Deleuze and Guattari put forward an alternative form of thinking humans, not as subjects and organs, but as networks of relations of force, assemblages, and modes of existence, as Simondian individuations: "There is a mode of individuation very different from that of a person, subject, thing, or substance. We reserve the name *haecceity* for it. A season, a winter, a summer, an hour, a date have a perfect individuality lacking nothing, even though this individuality is different from that of a thing or a subject. They are haecceities in the sense that they consist entirely of relations of movement and rest between molecules and particles, capacities to affect and be affected."[47] Haecceity, or "this-ness," produces modes of individuation that are not subjects, but assemblages of relations of force and potential that construct, at every moment within a specific spatiotemporal limit, what I have been calling ahumans. There's no soul or architecture of being

to ahumans that must be united, merely a perpetually transforming emergence of forces that transform in the dynamics of time. Time is thereby where the action is, gesturing toward a pre-individuated agency that emerges often through actions and is only retrospectively intelligible or recognized through figurations. Haecceity could operate, furthermore, as an ethicopolitical strategy that creates resonances between multiple "this-ness-es" that intersect around immanent events; it neither builds an organic community that has liberal democracy as its goal, nor does it get recuperated within secular humanism. Instead its politicization is intersectional, entangled in the stuff of time, creating new possibilities of politicization.

As my above analysis of Appadurai and Stenou and the 2000 World Culture Report indicate, many U.S. intellectuals who work in cultural studies continue to rely on the processes of transcendence through the heroicization of individual human agency through culture. They claim that culture, local or global, can transcend the disciplinary structures of the nation-state, even while the nation-state's own institutions are eviscerated by neoliberalism. Unwittingly, this discourse works too closely with the idea of exceptional individuals (sufficiently cultured) as useful assets. I am arguing, instead, for an alternative mode of organization based on mapping the ahuman. The ahuman, unlike the posthuman, does not have a chronological or temporal scale, but nevertheless the human is still recognized as one agent among many, even when that agent has no clue as to its emergence. Ahumans are not solely defined by the networks of equivalencies, of trust, honor, duty, and debt, but by networks of possible connections in time, or transindividuations in Simondon's terminology. The ahuman assemblage of agency is always in the process of becoming. It is a fluid and dynamic manner of existing, formed not by individuals or subjects, but by individuations, "haecceities," emerging "resonances" of people or ahuman agents, through contingent figurations that may have a form of appearance . . . or not. The self-other distinction, therefore, need not be defined solely in terms of specific individuals in relationship to other forms of subjectivity, such as the market human, but rather in relationship to the other that always coexists and destabilizes a coherent sense of self.

To struggle with dynamic and contingent forces of capital and markets, perhaps we need to consider the importance of immanent and modulating singularities for conceiving humans as ahumans. Networks of singularities, of differing peoples, put in resonance not because of a will, a cultural essence or an identity, but via a process relation, an affectation of substitution, indetermination, and subterfuge—these may offer a different way for thinking ahuman agency. Singularities are contingent; they are coagulations

of relations of potentials, force, energy, and power. They do not have a continued existence. They emerge and connect immanently with other relations to produce new modulations of alliances with differential elements—a process of persistent engendering of individuations in Simondon's sense. These singularities do not recuperate a transcendent form of the nation-state, or a cultural and diasporic formation. I suggest the necessity for thinking nonhuman and unhuman modifications of agency as networks of relations of singularities that are expressed as force, energy, and texts, which I am naming ahumans. Subsequent chapters will further materialize these emerging agents through examination of speculative fictions, which provide images of thought on which to develop concepts and thereby create a future present of possible inchoate politicization. Singularities problematize transcendence and the entombing effects of UNESCO's figuration of cultural humans, always already rendered useful assets, in what I have referred to as the danger of utilitarian humanism. Instead of existing as humans rendered useful or not, singularities engendered by humans force the thinking of modes of action that are not perforce incorporated into individuals, subjects, or multitudes that consolidate singularities into well-traced wills. They are wills themselves constantly emerging, as Nietzsche would say. The organizing principle of these singularities *is* persistent modulation, substitution, and transformation; hence I will be discussing translation between languages in a subsequent chapter as a mechanism to map these transformations that are not merely capital intensive. These connections work alongside nation, culture, human subject, and market, and provide alternative forms of dynamic and transmuting organization around indetermination. Instead of soul, there is haecceity in the heart of ahumans. Instead of the party, the state, diasporic cultural formation, or the linguistic interpretive community, there exists a nonorganic form of resonating singularities—ahumans—that are not reified through culture, or language, or national history—all of which are directed to defining the limits of the human. Cultural critics, UNESCO theorists, and realist politicians might also consider nonfoundational, noncommunalist intersections of singularities in their prescriptions for humans, instead of merely replicating the habit of soul production.

I have been describing in these last two chapters why thinking agency differently from the subject is so crucial. I first delineated the market human as an apparatus of subjectivity capture that reifies life through market categories. The market human views itself along economic categories as an asset, whereby various degrees of entrepreneurialism are the signs of the life worth living. I next shifted to the securing of culture as forms of

subjectivity usually seen as separate from state and market, but in this process—what I call utilitarian humanism—culture is actually limited to market instrumentalities and humans are thought as assets. Through these two chapters I have shown how market principles entomb life through ideas of utility with regard to both subjectivity and culture, which have often been considered third-way modes of organization and human resistance to capital and state. These chapters also show how the reorganization of capital and free markets are affecting historical concepts of the human, rendering human practices into cultural capital, industrializing consciousness as an asset, or shepherding practices for their usefulness. In my next chapter I look at the group of philosophers who advocate an object-oriented ontology to consider a posthuman alternative outside of subjectivity. They offer a devastating critique of anthropocentrism, but one that I posit may work too comfortably with financial capital's reorganization of life around speculation and leveraged debt. As I have shown with the concepts of market humans and utilitarian humanism, the market can operate with a limited number of humans, rendering vast populations expendable. In the next chapter, I focus on how reification entombs beings precisely to reorganize life, human and otherwise, for its potential leveraging by financial capital.

CHAPTER 3

The Hedge Fund of Reality

Ontology and Financial Derivatives

In the previous two chapters, we have encountered how states and civil societies reorganize economic being in order to direct resources, citizens, and cultural attributes and foster economic growth for market humans, even when this restructuring actually works against the majority of their peoples. Vast populations within and outside the institutions of the nation-state, such as the "expendables" or cultural beings who cannot demonstrate use, ironically lose their capacity to be subjected for failing to connect to the modes of value currently organized by capital. As I argued in the introduction, semiocapitalism increasingly functions through the trafficking of symbols that provide the instanciation of monetization; in other words, signs, even those that defy human cognitive mapping, signs without comprehensible referents, still fabricate reality, even, perversely, to destroy productive capacities. Every recent economic crisis reminds us that the disappearance of paper wealth affects the real economy. This has led governments (those of Britain, Ireland, Greece, Spain, Italy, the United States, and so on) to bail out banks and insurance firms, and in the process bail out private equity and hedge funds, using the very taxpayer money they no longer employ to promote goods and services for the common welfare. To

counter these captures of subjectivity, I outlined in the last chapter immanent agencies of life with the idea of "this-nesses" (haecceity) simultaneously connecting and disaggregating due to the historical and contextual variables of the moment, to embody the premise of the ahuman, the indeterminate undecidability of being. The ahuman is the other side of the expendables; it is a way to think agency differently, beyond states of abjection, when the human is no longer defined by secular humanism. These fields of agency will be captured soon enough and turned into objects of knowledge, as I outlined with respect to market humans, the utilitarian subject of culture, or more generally in terms of speciesism. Keeping in mind these subjectivist forces of capture and control, I want to extend my analysis to the ontological turn in the humanities, a project that seemingly revolutionizes metaphysical studies by taking us away from subjectivism, the stultifying perils of representation, and the anthropocentric limits of the human mind for analysis. In this chapter I examine how the preoccupation of object-oriented ontology (OOO) with the necessary critiques of anthropocentrism and transcendence of modernity blinds it to its own viscosity vis-à-vis capital. I ask whether OOO may provide a legitimation discourse for a posthuman condition that capital has already been producing by reifying life throughout modernity. Many cultural critics and theorists beholden to OOO ironically celebrate critiques of anthropocentrism as political ends in themselves, or advocate for new intelligences only through the specialization of mathematics.[1] This is the very tool that accountants and financial engineers employ to render life into a cost-benefit analysis or investment instrument. Others have challenged the OOO thinkers for their failure to offer any novel reading of the Kantian thing-in-itself except though rhetorical flourish (Peter Wolfendale), indicated that what has also been termed *speculative realism* does not exist except as an intellectual brand (Ray Brassier), or marked that the substantialism of OOO may still slide into the idealism and anthropocentrism that it claims to avoid, or may be negatively formed as a critique of phenomenology (Steven Shaviro).[2] I will focus instead on OOO's central tenets of ontological egalitarianism and withdrawal of objects from human perception and explore how these features normalize the reification of life. Its focus on objects ignores any engagement with how economy and politics remake ontology and ethics in light of financial capital's ascendance. OOO's premise of conceptualizing humans as objects ontologically equivalent to tools or machines is ridiculously obvious, as any worker realizes when confronting his or her daily reality, specifically when being replaced at work by technology, or forced to move to another nation and employ another language due to

political-economic instability, in the manner of a refugee. (I return to the latter issue in chapters 4 and 5.) Even within the privileged world of academia, such scenarios weigh like a nightmare on the living via the replacement of face-to-face teaching by online education, which requires fewer faculty, by standardized assessment rubrics that measure "skills" rather than knowledge, and the replacement of full-time employees with the reserve armies of adjunct instructors working for subsistence wages.

The Equality of Objects and Reification

For the proponents of OOO, all objects are equal, including humans, things, sounds, affects, sensations, Heidegger's brain, a slime mold, and Kant's engorging ass when he sits on a pin; they exhibit what Levi Bryant calls "ontological egalitarianism."[3] Describing how objects withdraw their being from human perception—"a thing is not just a thing for humans, but a thing for many other things as well, both material and immaterial" (Ian Bogost, *Alien Phenomenology*, 25)—OOO emphasizes not only the anthropocentrism of Kant's philosophy even with regard to the "thing-in-itself," but also the equality of objects in the "mesh" of "interobjective" existence, in Timothy Morton's terms (*Hyperobjects*). The object-oriented ontologists, reacting to post-Heideggerian arguments and rightfully critical of the reductive social constructionist arguments that predominated during cultural studies' supremacy, successfully attack the myth of autonomous agency and the intentional subject, "the privileged transcendental sphere" (Morton) of what Quentin Meillassoux and others call "metaphysical subjectivation" (*After Finitude*). They do so by reconceiving notions of agency through ontological categories of *Dasein* and being, instead of through new forms of subjectivity. Moreover, they diagnose the ontological flatness of things, animals, humans, and even complex technological systems having the capacity to think speculatively and realistically: "Speculative realism names not only speculative philosophy that takes existence to be separate from thought but also a philosophy *claiming that things speculate*, and, furthermore, one *that speculates about how things speculate*" (Bogost, *Alien Phenomenology*, 31). To that end, Bryant proposes an "onticology" of flat ontology; Graham Harman suggests his seminal "tool-being"; Morton augments these concepts with "hyperobjects," while Bogost offers an "alien phenemonology." Most of the texts of OOO present a series of philosophical readings and strategies centered on attacking phenomenological intentionality, a far-from-novel aim in light of the U.S. reception of French theory

since the late 1960s, and light on encounters with the reality or social theory that we can ostensibly, after them, begin to think.[4]

Through its metaphysics of withdrawal, OOO offers an attempt to think autopoietic processes and rejects the process-oriented philosophies of Deleuze, complexity theory, and the new materialism,[5] while dismissing the idea of embeddedness for the speculative realist world of objects and hyperobjects. Morton, for example, describes hyperobjects as entities that are so grand in temporal and spatial dimensions that they defy traditional idealist and materialist categories of thought: "hyperobjects are not simply mental (or otherwise ideal) constructs, but are real entities whose primordial reality is withdrawn from humans" (*Hyperobjects*, 15). Objects have an existence independent of human perception or knowledge of them, or in the words of Morton, "[W]e are not living in a *world*. . . . [*O*]*bjects* are what constitute reality. . . . Objects are withdrawn from one another and from themselves" (116). Morton, following Graham Harman, theorizes inaccessible and withdrawing things and objects as markers of organic and nonorganic forms of being, and promulgates an occasionalist argument that there can be no causality between objects without the mediation of a third.[6] In this universe of objects and hyperobjects, we dwell in a realm of stuff that sticks to us, as Morton puts it, and the human is reoriented as one object among many.

Pointing out how nuclear waste sticks to us and that there is no "outside" to a planet plagued by environmental degradation, Morton's texts are primarily focused on apt criticisms of the Romantic strands of the ecological movement. Morton rightfully attacks environmentalists for monetizing the saving of the environment, while identifying the main problem with critics of capitalism, from Heideggerians to British Petroleum CEO Tony Hayward, as their metaphysical thinking, their conception of an essential "beyond," instead of an immersive viscous connection with "a flattened world without ontological U-bends," with the "oozing real" (*Hyperobjects*, 115). I do not disagree that criticizing recourse to a "beyond"—as Derrida put it in his 1967 post-Heideggerian critique of the essence of Lèvinas's metaphysics—is certainly pertinent. Humans are never more metaphysical than when they claim to surmount metaphysics. Morton is right to emphasize "the impossibility of maintaining a cynical distance, the dominant ideological mode of our age" (ibid., 24). Nor do I have a problem with acknowledging "the immanence of thinking to the physical" (ibid., 2). However, I wait for the political implications of hyperobjects, or, more specifically, I wonder what the politics of the Styrofoam cup—the residual object that persists when the concept of the world ceases to exist—will be

after the end of the world. The strategy of Morton's book "is to awaken us from the dream that the world is about to end, because action on Earth (the real Earth) depends on it" (ibid., 7). But what is the post-anthropocentric "us" that is to awaken from the dream? And how will post-anthropocentric agents struggle with hyperobjects to produce what Morton calls a "political ontology"? Despite the ontological goals of this mode of thought, such arguments give the impression of being curiously subjectivist and anthropocentric. Morton seems to suggest ontological thought as a kind of transcendent consciousness-raising, a danger for any philosophy claiming to escape subjectivism.

Putting aside the subjectivism that creeps into virtually every OOO argument for a moment, Morton's *Hyperobjects* does engage extensively with capitalism while arguing for a new phenomenology of viscosity, nonlocality, phasing, temporal undulation, and interobjectivity via the idea of the end of the world. In service to his attack on Romanticism, Morton unfortunately focuses his analysis on the industrial capitalism of modernity and the production of objects. Morton sees capital as a hyperobject committed to expropriating labor and natural resources—Heidegger's *bestand*, or standing reserve of raw materials (*Hyperobjects*, 113)—and he views it, in its stockpiling of objects, as the "dominant mode of social existence" (ibid.), suffocating humans in stuff; "capitalism has unleashed myriad objects upon us" (ibid., 115), while destroying the human habitat during the Anthropocene. Morton argues that capitalism is primarily reactive in relationship to natural resources, which is a curiously modern concept of industrial capitalism, focused on consumption of goods and services. Indeed, the majority of Morton's examples stem from modernity, as he poses OOO and speculative realism as the means to think differently from the modern era. It is surprising that a project devoted to thinking outside human time and the human scale should focus so thoroughly on modernity's metaphysics that it comes across as quasi-theological, regardless of its own critique of ontotheology in thinking the historical: "Ethics and politics in a postmodern age after Hume and Kant must be based in attunement to directives coming from entities, which boils down to accepting and listening to true lies" (ibid., 183). So taking Morton seriously while thinking historically, what is a financial derivative saying? If we are being generous, it is a residual object, but how do we think its ethics? Or more generally, how would OOO think the ethics of financial capitalism?

Morton's focus here on the consumer society of industrial capitalism ignores many theorists of neoliberalism, from Maurizio Lazzarato and Franco "Bifo" Berardi to Bernard Stiegler, even to Robert Reich and

Thomas Piketty, who outline how industrial capitalism and consumer society is in crisis due to vast social inequality and the sheer fact that there is more "stuff" than there are beings able to consume it.[7] Piketty, among others, argues that inequality has intensified in light of the increased role of financial capitalism in the global economy. Financial firms are focused on short-term gains in shareholder value and the management of risk, and actually view labor and objects as entities to be overcome due to their impinging on value production. Piketty and Greta Krippner also comment on how much of the U.S. economy is now based on financial services that generate value through lending money via complex derivatives, bond trading, currency exchange, or mergers and acquisitions, rather than through investment in the production of innovative consumer goods or services.[8] This has been particularly visible with regard to Apple Inc. since the death of Steve Jobs, and for large companies such as General Motors, which earns more by lending money to consumers to buy its cars than through selling the cars themselves.[9] In the words of Adair Turner, the chairman of the Financial Services Authority in the United Kingdom after the 2008 economic crisis: "The trend varies slightly country by country, but the broad direction is clear: across all advanced economies, and the United States and the UK in particular, the role of the capital markets and the banking sector in funding new investment is decreasing. Most of the money in the system is being used for lending against existing assets."[10] Companies such as Apple or Pfizer, the pharmaceutical giant, increasingly function like banks, hoarding money to guarantee short-term shareholder value and CEO compensation, which are often tied to stock valuations, even if doing so may mean no longer developing new products.[11] These strategies of deriving value from leveraging risk are the hallmarks of financial capitalism. To return to Morton's preoccupation with capital as production, is consumer capitalism and an abundance of stuff the problem? Financial capital seems to think differently, as it hoards money and offers compensation to a limited few, recognizing that there may not be enough consumers to purchase all the stuff that is produced. How does this work, exactly?

Objet Petit A: Economic Ontologies

Both hedge funds and private equity are objects that withdraw their being into dark pools of liquidity not only to avoid taxes and regulations, but also to operate in a prerepresentational sphere of anonymity and unaccountability, even down to the fees they charge their clients.[12] Hedge funds, equity firms, and banks bundle financial instruments to spurn symbolic

losses and operate as vast substances of wealth possibility. Pools of potential economic value, which is ultimately what banks, hedge funds, and private equity firms *are*, do not privilege humans or commodities. They produce a post-anthropocentric reality through assuming the ontological sameness of human capital, commodities, and stock transactions, not to mention derivatives, bond trading, and currency exchanges. As quasi-representational entities, hedge funds and private equity firms frustrate rational categories of the human mind through complex organization, and work to create value from debt by probabilistically anticipating risks, crises, and unforeseen disturbances in the interconnected economies. They are post-anthropocentric and problematize subject-object dualism, a central idea of object-oriented ontology and its mediation of the third object. Indeed, speculative derivatives and currency exchanges often exist only to generate value through mathematical equations pertaining to fluctuating value—money making money without being mediated by the production of an object or conferral of a service. Following Ian Bogost's logic, we can also speculate on what hedge funds and private equity firms *think* despite their defying representation (Generate value! Leverage assets! Manage risk!), even when there is no possibility of actually seeing what a hedge fund *does* due to its withdrawal of being, its ontological extraction of value and wealth. Admittedly, in the instance of arbitrage, the mediation of the third object (another market) may in fact allow for value creation in the interstices of the two market values. But let us consider further the premise of the mediation of the third object in light of what Karl Marx called *reification*.

Marx introduced the term *reification* to describe the social relations between people who were subsumed by the commodity, whose existence in exchange became that social relation, also known as commodity fetishism. For Marx, recognizing an object-oriented ontology of commodities and services, reification was tied up with the metaphysical reality and "mysterious thing" of the commodity that represented the accumulation of time: "A commodity appears, at first sight, a very trivial thing, and easily understood. Its analysis shows that it is, in reality, a very queer thing, abounding in metaphysical subtleties and theological niceties."[13] Things exercise agency and being, while human energy or labor-power ossifies in things; in the process, humans are alienated from their own forms of production and value. Value does not thereby reside in things themselves, but is realized through the social life of things, the "social hieroglyphic" (Marx, *Capital*, 1:167) in their production, exchange, or circulation: "This is the reason why the products of labour become commodities, social things whose qualities are at the same time perceptible and imperceptible by the senses."[14]

Marx's focus on the metaphysical quality of the thing, its materialism in relationship to other things, indicates a shift from human perception to dynamic, lively forces, and the need to envision how labor could struggle within the object. As a result, for Marx reification marks a universe of objects and information, in which the worker is merely one commodity-form of capital ("capital is dead labor") among many.[15] To counteract this labor capture, the ossification of life within commodities, Marx emphasized the way in which labor is a form of life; it is living labor, a field of energy that needs to be reoriented for new possibilities of life outside the industrial process, the standing reserve of leisure time.[16] Marx's anthropocentrism thus resides less in some epistemic failure or residual subjectivism than in his recognition of capital's ability to render all life as substances, specifically employing human labor as a tool of its extension.[17]

Steven Shaviro contends in his critique of Graham Harman that the withdrawal of objects described by OOO relies on substantialism: "For Harman, actual entities have only one aspect: they are quite definitely, and exclusively, things or substances, no matter how brief or transient their existence. . . . [Harman] gets rid of the problem of explaining [relations] by decreeing that '*any relation must count as a substance*.'"[18] For Shaviro, this relational substance provides a less dynamic view of the world than does Alfred North Whitehead's critique of the bifurcation of nature and actuality: "we are trapped within the bifurcation of nature when we divide the world into actual, material things that are inaccessible to us, on the one hand, and the impressions or ideas of these things that subsist in the mind, on the other. Against this tradition, Whitehead insists that we actually do directly encounter things other than ourselves; 'an actual entity *is* present in other actual entities.' . . . Things move us, or force us to feel them, and by this very fact they elude the correlational schemas in which we would wish to contain them."[19] Shaviro analyzes with Whitehead the capacity to affect as a type of power and control, and like Marx traces how dynamic ontological change occurs within networks of interconnected relations. Dynamic processes, rather than essential substances and the world of appearances, alter the object's being through their connections, including, ironically, through reification. It is these processes and their connections, not the withdrawal of some core substance, that bring about changes in objects, as Shaviro argues in his critique of Harman. Objects transform depending on their connections to other object-beings in a complex and changing field, regardless of human perception, and are dynamically reconfigured at every moment, including through the reification techniques of symbols, figurations, and representations.

Lukács elaborates Marx's theory of reification to foreground how human bodies and minds becomes reified not just in bureaucratic structures or the management rationalizations of Frederick Taylor, but in the very fiber of being itself:

> The transformation of the commodity relation into a thing of "ghostly objectivity" cannot therefore content itself with the reduction of all objects for the gratification of human needs to commodities. It stamps its imprint upon the whole consciousness of man; *his qualities and abilities are no longer an organic part of his personality, they are things which he can "own" or "dispose of" like the various objects of the external world. And there is no natural form in which human relations can be cast, no way in which man can bring his physical and psychic "qualities" into play without their being subjected increasingly to this reifying process.*[20] (Italics mine.)

Lukács and Marx refer to reification as a conceptual schema entombing life and social relations within capital's instrumentalities as objects in relation, in a description comparable to the correlationist argument with regard to the human subject. Lukács theorizes labor (human energy) and objects, however, in terms that help us understand reification in light of finance capital, or what Marx called "fictitious capital," for which the mode of production is not physical objects but the rendering of life itself into exchangeable units or investment products.[21] No facet of existence can eschew the reifying process, as life provides the raw material for the speculative prospect of controlling beings and markets. In other words, reification breaks life, human and otherwise, into a series of exchangeable parts, including capital assets and value, or streams of data and digital profiles.

The human thereby becomes one distinct if not fully knowable object that is further rendered into fungible relational sets of things in circulation, dynamic fields of energy for possible financialization. (In subsequent chapters I will discuss these processes with two concrete examples, namely, digital technologies' datamining of eyeballs on web pages, and the global trafficking of tissues, cell lines, and organs.) Borrowing from complexity and systems theory and ostensibly from social theory, the object-oriented ontologist Ian Bogost argues extensively for thinking in terms of units instead of things or objects (*Alien Phenomenology*, 25), seemingly a shift from Harman's substantialism. Yet a unit is also an economic measure for financial capitalism in its dissection of objects (in the terms used in OOO); it reifies weather events, floods, human workers, porn videos, music, news,

history, and waste management into mathematical sets of potential fungible units.

Marx described the social element of capital, its *mission civilisatrice*, as its production of societies dominated by commodities that reify social existence. As I discussed above, with the ascendance of financial capital's melding of banking and industrialization, consumer society—a society based on the production and consumption of objects—becomes merely one aspect of capital's "civilizing mission" to transform life into exchangeable parts, into assets and money. As Costas Lapavitsas outlines, finance creates profits without producing commodities per se, and without relying on expropriating surplus value from laborers, or on rent, or even on the extension of credit.[22] In the Fordist factory system, industrialization produced objects and commodities while incorporating the human into the machinery. Financial capital instead futurally shepherds and orients life to become a unit, an element, a data set, a site of capitalization or debt, normalizing all relations, human and nonhuman, to a transactional reality based on credit and debt. In other words, we see a shift in capitalism from domination by production to expropriation and capture. This transformation marks why labor and consumption are less central to economies like our own, dominated by financialization, than the fungibility and marshalling of value. To reiterate: In the factory of the modern era, workers connected to tools to create material objects that extend in time and space. With the ascendancy of financial capitalism, complex financial processes generate value through futurally oriented speculative promises based on contractual obligations such as securities, derivatives, and arbitrage. The human element is often incidental to the transactional reality, or nonexistent, as my introductory example of high-frequency trading and analysis described. Or the human is increasingly captured by capital to function as a transactional reality, as I discussed in chapter 1 with respect to the market human and in chapter 2 in connection with culture transacted through utilitarian categories. The human subject is increasingly treated as a fungible unit to be transacted. In the next section, I want to tease out how the withdrawal of being of objects described by OOO may reify life and legitimate an economy dominated by symbolic systems (e.g., mathematical equations, cost-benefit analyses displayed via spread sheets) designed to defy representation except when extracting profits—in other words, a space-time in which financial capitalism predominates. Let us consider how the hedge funds and dark pools of capital reify forms of existence to work increasingly in the manner of financial derivatives.

Derivatives and Subjectivism

Derivatives are contracts between parties concerning any value-inducing abstraction, such as an asset, commodity price, currency fluctuation, stock, or index, which may not correspond to any material entity in the world. Derivative valuation emerges through exchange. While derivatives are financial instruments that were initially designed to manage risk in the buying and selling of commodities, such as future agricultural harvests, they have become independent, abstract value-producing mechanisms connected to indices, foreign exchange rates, securities, futures, mutual funds, and structured risk-management assets. For example, currency speculation and catastrophe bonds are two monetized derivatives: the first is based on the probability of fluctuations in the value of currencies relative to the real economy and other currencies (euros, dollars, renminbi), and the second on the probability of a natural event such as a hurricane happening, wreaking mass devastation, or not. (I discuss this latter example further in chapter 7.) Derivatives are speculative instruments, virtual promissory notes between parties based on perpetually fluctuating market indices. They are formalized by contracts between the parties to create or extract value from futures, options, and structured debt. Most importantly, derivatives formalize a structure of debt as itself a form of speculative value. As a result, debt is a site of fungible value production—just consider collateral debt obligations or bundled student loans, mortgages, and car loans. As more and more workers' pensions are connected to the machinations of the stock market, derivatives and stocks and bonds become ontological materialities that create their own emerging practices of life, human and otherwise, in order to generate revenue streams.[23] Judgments on derivatives are probabilistic due to the complexity of their services, and they often operate through mathematical models to enfigure risk, speaking further, perhaps, to my earlier discussion of the market human as the successful manager of risk. As risk is a model for deriving profits even from undesirable outcomes, the goal of derivatives is to limit life to a series of judgments based on a risk calculus, whereby certain market humans may have status as subjects. *For the rest of being and beings, this system divides forms of life into units and objects for exchange and monetization, reducing human life to a transactional form of agency that may lack value*. I discussed this issue in the last two chapters with regard to market humans and UNESCO's connection of culture to the market, whereby market metrics are used to determine what is "useful" culture.

I am redeploying the Marxist category of reification in this chapter not only to mark resonances between the critiques of Marx and those of OOO,

but also to theorize the objectification of the human, its shift toward existing as a transactional reality, similar to a derivative. Indeed, derivatives embody the instrumentalization or reification of life itself, a reification that demands the reconfiguration of life in contractual terms of obligation and debt that usurp any concept of social contract or of society. In other words, while OOO would question Lukács's use of mind, qualities, and consciousness as anthropocentric, phenomenological, or representational, financial capitalism's "thingification of the human" does not merely commodify humans as brands or producers of things that destroy the environment, though in fact that does happen most frightfully as human consciousness is molded by market categories. (The self-reflexivity of OOO itself, its protecting its brand and product line, as Ray Brassier put it, provides an interesting example.[24]) Instead, capital treats the human as one more object or power source among many in circulation, one that functions as a continuous conduit within a monetizing machinery. For example, human labor becomes a transactional object that can be dispensed with through the retirement, or firing of workers or through outsourcing, in order to raise shareholder value or a stock's valuation. Human labor is a unit that can exist on either end of the creditor-debtor relationship. With financial capitalism's focus on derivatives and other value-producing monetizing mechanisms that may play little or no role in the creation of physical objects, the human is reconfigured as part of a network of units, one among many within a set of expendable objects, useful as a source of energy, including its living labor, but also for its attention, shopping habits, pension (also a site of value production and speculation), and perhaps most importantly for its capacity to honor debts. *At the same time, if the human fails to honor its obligations and contracts or is functionally useless, it becomes in part or in toto a dispensable instrument. Consequently, the human is already treated as a nonhuman thing and persists not only as a rapacious consumer of stuff, but also through its useful capacity to perform a transactional reality as a possible site of monetization, derivation of value, or ability to forge a contract and honor a debt.*[25]

My argument with OOO is that posthumanist discourses focused only on critiques of anthropocentrism may legitimate the techniques of financial capitalism, which daily engage in the work of deanthropocentrizing humans through complex technological and digital processes and automated systems that facilitate the outsourcing of jobs and workers. Marx reminds us that capital overcomes barriers and shepherds existences like so many potatoes in a sack. Marx's historical materialism warns of the endless

repetition of a history of reducing life to transactionality, measurement, and calculation. The unparalleled work of political scientist Melinda Cooper stages the complicity between theoretical biologists with their complexity theory, and neoliberal economists, and diagnoses how vitalism becomes a legitimation strategy: "it is because life is negentropic, it seems, that economic growth is without end. And it is because life is self-organizing that we should reject all state regulation of markets. This is a vitalism that comes dangerously close to equating the evolution of life with that of capital."[26] Cooper is marking how process-oriented modes of thought can be easily expropriated by capital. Neoliberal and financial economics deploy the language of immanence, chaos, and complexity to justify wild swings in valuations of capital, specifically with volatile and bundled speculative financial instruments such as collateral debt obligations, and mark ontology as economic ontology.[27] My point is that an ontological argument like that of OOO that forgets how humans have historically operated as objects can likewise provide a legitimizing discourse for financial capitalism. The historical rise of subjectivism as an antidote, failed and flawed though it may be, makes sense as an affective reaction to counteract the homogenizing effects of capital, which industrializes existence while sending humans "rain and sunshine from above." The danger is that the concept of the posthuman can operate to normalize the circulation of humans unless the contingencies of time are brought into focus.

Conclusion: Speculative Polyani

Karl Polyani in his brilliant 1944 *The Great Transformation* warns of the normalization of industrial processes throughout the social sphere, a point I addressed at length in chapter 1 in connection with Gramsci and Foucault. For Polyani the self-regulating market not only marks economic industrialization, but the industrialization of existence, including thought itself, over deep time. He analyzes changes in institutions from the nineteenth into the twentieth century to diagnose how the central idea of the self-regulating market captures labor, land, and nature as mutually presupposed elements of existence for a seemingly autonomous object, the market. Polyani acknowledges the great transformation in the nineteenth century from a commercial society to a market-dominated one, whereby the market functions as an absolutist system of expropriation: "A self-regulating market . . . could not exist for any length of time without annihilating the human and natural substance of society; it would have physically destroyed man and transformed his surroundings into a wilderness. . . . Nothing could

seem more inept than . . . to argue the inevitable self-destruction of civilization on account of some technical quality of its economic organization. . . . Yet it is this we are undertaking. . . . As if the forces of change had been pent up for a century, a torrent of events is pouring down on mankind."[28] In this configuration, Polyani reacts to the liberalist economic premise of the self-regulating market being endowed with Cartesian subjectivity, with a cogito that exercises rational choices, thereby maintaining a generalized equilibrium to avoid a disturbance in the system. In this mode of thought, the market is the centralized rational mind assaulted by a cavalcade of irrational humans guided by their emotions and affect, who misuse logic and reason and create crises for the market's automatically self-regulating mechanism. Like *God* and *mind* before it, the market supposedly thinks and knows rational order and eternal harmony when left to its own devices, self-corrections, and internal substance—to expropriate all forms of life for its extension. Yet under this liberalist argument, the market is simultaneously a subject as substance and a human-made projection that is taken to be the world, the absolute. This conception of the market serves as an example of what Quentin Meillasoux, Graham Harman, and Timothy Morton chastise as "correlationism" in Western philosophy—that is, the idea that humans have access only to the correlation between the mind and the world and thus can never know the "thing-in-itself," undistorted by subjectivity. An extreme version of correlationism is the idea that the world is dependent on, or is even a product of, the human mind. Humans personify markets, yet the market exists ontologically through the autonomy of things. The market not only expropriates surplus labor, but also reconfigures the human as a structured asset for risk management. In other words, merely thinking "hyperobjects" or "the posthuman" does not put either of them outside market metrics.

When we weigh how reification functions as a dynamic process, we see how OOO provides the philosophical justification for thought's transcendence at a moment when arguably the financial market and data are auditioning to replace God or mind and its subsidiaries of subjectivity in our financialized, neoliberalist present. For Quentin Meillassoux, thinking must strive for an absolute of thought, "an absolute that is at once external to thought and in itself devoid of all subjectivity."[29] Meillassoux proposes the "absolutization of mathematics" (*After Finitude*, 127) as a way to counter the anthropologizing drive to see the world in the terms of human thought. This mathematical absolute, however, consists of the "contingency of every entity" (ibid., 126) to "rediscover thought's absolutizing scope" and promote "speculation that excludes all metaphysics" (ibid., 128). Thought

without concepts becomes the orientation to reality, and pure math offers topological possibilities of mapping all the failures of sensibility and human sense-making. Yet Meillassoux's discourse on thinking without humans and his celebration of the absolute of math resonates with the mindset of titans of speculative capitalism as they shepherd quantitative analysts to model risk and asset portfolios throughout the market, even if there is no correspondence between Meillassoux's work and the diurnal workings of finance. Indeed, the global market offers a Hegelian absolute that would make Meillassoux shudder. Nevertheless it projects a world without humans, a world of mathematical value creation as probability, if not knowability, with the market orienting and mediating objects. In moments of financial collapse, for example, the market becomes too complex for the human mind to understand, leading to a popular market-centered discourse: Let the market, corporation, and/or complex financial instrument be autonomous, external to the human, for their complexity defies anthropocentric thinking. Human intelligence cannot understand how the autonomous objects—for example, collateral debt obligations and credit default swaps during the 2008 financial crisis—withdraw their being. I contend that the arguments of OOO for thinking a universe of things and objects resonate seamlessly with financial neoliberalism's legitimation discourse. With every economic crisis, the market becomes enfigured once again as a substantialist force of nature that exceeds human conceptualization in light of processes of mathematical, physical, and metaphysical complexity. The market is; its being withdraws from human comprehension; it can be grasped only through probabilistic measurement and modeling by the quantitative analysts. Indeed, such substantialist ontological arguments, with their ideological naturalization of social relations, are generally what make Marxists after *The German Ideology* bristle. Yet rather than dwell on Marxist truth claims of sorting through ideology for that unmediated kernel of the real or an immaculate outside to the market, I return to Karl Polyani's analysis of liberalism for its heuristic value by dramatizing the market-centrism that produces ontology and instrumentalizes existence. The market becomes a hyperobject that withdraws its being while orienting objects for their futural qualities as assets.

Humanism's sovereign, free subject also follows the logic of derivatives, which indicates how thoroughly the form of the subject and the social are captured by power and economic ontology. Derivatives not only establish a credit-and-debt relationship as paramount for existence, they also refocus the sense of obligation, shifting it from the "social contract" between an individual and society or the state, toward the individual self. Indeed,

derivatives remake the contract form of subjectivity to foreground a debt to oneself, an obligation to be free to derive value as an individual in a hyperregulated society, and to assume individual responsibility for risk. At the same time, as beings with the right to make promises, as Nietzsche once put it, humans are oriented to act as if they themselves are a form of securitized assets. As I have shown in chapter 1 with respect to Foucault and Gramsci, for the economic human of neoliberalism, a subject enclosed upon himself or herself as an isolated individual, freedom is the right to be left alone in the market and thereby assume and manage risk, which becomes, through a curious tautology, ontological freedom. Consequently, one "owes" oneself a life of prosperity in the neoliberal society of competition and diminished resources, even if that way of life puts others at risk in the immediate future, renders oneself into a form of collateralized debt, or sets the planet on a collision course toward resource exhaustion and environmental degradation. Moreover, by shifting the subject's orientation from the collective to the individual, the subject is disarmed not only from thinking collectively but also from thinking power as anything but work on the self, a point I believe Foucault was weighing in his later work on the aesthetics of existence and the subject and power.

While the flogging of humanism and anthropocentrism have become spectator sports for the object-oriented ontologists and posthumanists, in subsequent chapters of this book I discuss how genetic engineering, digital technologies, and neoliberalism remake humans as units, as transgenic beings, organs in circulation, interfaces, or eyeballs on web pages for financial speculation and monetization. Speculative financial instruments generate capital and value through derivatives, creating a new economic landscape in which mass consumption is no longer the main driver, and data and numbers supplant ideas of the human, of equality and social justice. For example, algorithms are a set of rules for "thinking" machines employed in the service sector, facilitating the replacement of workers, from bank tellers to lawyers. *Such automatic processes mark how the expropriation of human living labor is no longer central to capitalism's production of reality*. This makes vast sectors of the world's population functionally redundant, leading not only to a historical moment when the connection between economic productivity and worker well-being is unhinged,[30] but also demonstrating how economic decisions are operationally post-anthropocentric in their movement to an absolute that can only be measured through probabilistic mathematics.

Consequently I discuss in the next section of the book how law has come to function in a posthuman manner, denying subjectivism while

reifying the human, but also producing legal justifications for treating humans as expendable. In the process, posthuman subjects serve up the human to forces that capture and vivisect it as merely one more element of capitalization. Polyani reminds us that a market-oriented society has little use for the idea of the human or for claims to the human's necessity within a market system: "the tendency to barter, on which Adam Smith so confidently relied for his picture of primitive man, is not a common tendency of the human being in his economic activities" (*Great Transformation*, 258). Instead, the market sees humans as things from which to extrapolate surplus value through labor. It expropriates value from the land, and leads to the creation of a banking system that generates value through the process of trade—all of which persist in our present, with the banking system now ascendant. The human and nature are barriers to the market's self-perpetuating growth in circulation that must be subsumed within capital: "instead of economy being embedded in social relations, social relations are embedded in the economic system" (Polanyi, *Great Transformation*, 60); "human society has become an accessory of the economic [market] system" (ibid.,79).

In short, I think that the subjectivity fostered by the social contract is being usurped by the subjectivity fostered by the derivative, the securitized subject who can honor debts, even if these debts are not of the securitized being's own making. Thus we need to envision how the reorganization of the state affects concepts of the human and the community in light of the market's universalization, the effects of which Polyani already critiqued due to the Great Depression and the nationalism and fascism it enabled. Rather than seeing the state in an adversarial relationship to the market, as have neoliberals of the Chicago School, for Polyani,

> Economic history reveals that the emergence of national markets was in no way the result of the gradual and spontaneous emancipation of the economic sphere from governmental control. On the contrary, the market has been the outcome of a conscious and often violent intervention on the part of government which imposed the market organization on society for noneconomic ends. . . . Industrial civilization will continue to exist when the utopian experiment of a self-regulating market will be no more than a memory. (*Great Transformation*, 259)

Polyani argued that the state was formed in relationship with the market and became a governing tool to shepherd its complex differential societies toward economic ends. Writing at the cusp of the creation of post-Depression welfare states in the United States and Europe, Polyani saw

hope for an industrial civilization disengaged from the premise and idea of the self-regulating market and the reconfiguration of the human through a transactional reality that sunders all other modes of being: "Such a scheme of destruction was best served by the application of the principle of freedom to contract. In practice this meant that the noncontractual organizations of kinship, neighborhood, profession, and creed were to be liquidated since they claimed the allegiance of the individual and thus restrained his freedom" (ibid., 171). Despite his excellent analysis and perhaps informed by the fascism that was raging as he wrote, Polyani saw great hope that society and politics could transcend economics. In the present, it appears that such hope neglects the affective relations of capitalism. Polyani's warning about the development of a subjectivity based on transactional contract forms gives us pause in light of the logic of the derivative I have been discussing. He foregrounds the precariousness of life outside contract forms and gestures toward how noncontractual relationships may be reconfigured by market forces or liquidated. At the same time, he diagnoses how the contract form as individualistic system dominated before the onset of the Fordist paternalism of the welfare state, an idea he favored, but one that is now being dismantled, as is the entire Fordist system. Instead, austerity is a new market-based kinship pattern imposed on populations to appease bondholders amid financialization as collectivity. At the same time, Polanyi's argument anticipates precisely the current proliferation of fundamentalist and nonsecular subjectivities in the political, cultural, and religious spheres in the Euro-Americas in response to generalized precarity. Often, these subjectivities defy the state's recognition and therefore are not part of the capture of culture by market orientations and biases that I outlined with the utilitarian human. What we are now witnessing inchoately, early in the Trump administration, suggests that such subjectivities may usher in the next round of xenophobic nationalism aimed at annihilation of the Other. We should be wary, however, of assuming that they do not serve the utilitarian functions of the market, that they are completely outside of the market's operationalities. Indeed, they have been created by the market.

Finance, I have been arguing, produces subjectivities that operate like derivatives, like futural, speculative promises that may never be realized. The logic of the financial derivative is parasitical, feeding off existing infrastructures in order to generate profits. The derivative within financial capitalism demonstrates new modes of valuation "deriving" from existent structures or beings that is a different mode of production. The attempt to think beyond subject-object dualism has led some speculative realists and object-oriented ontologists to dispense with subjectivism and anthropo-

centrism, deriving an idea of the world as a multiplicity of equal objects. I have argued in this chapter that this logic provides a legitimation discourse for a market that tragically reifies life and monetizes humans, culture, and existence, enabling the social engineering and bioengineering of life.

By making the autonomy of objects and the critique of anthropocentrism and subjectivism its politics, OOO foregrounds an individualistic way of thinking the world, even while putting forward its nonhuman phenomenology and speculating on what objects and animals think. While the subject-object dualism is essential for both studies of metaphysics and of physical reality, I agree with process-oriented philosophers and new materialists in thinking the processes that generate entities we name retrospectively subject or object and questioning how things (human and nonhuman) exist is a more apt formulation of life than the all-too-human distinction between subjects and objects. The focus of OOO on subjectivism, while astute, sees subjects as substances, an argument that neglects the dynamic role of power in reconfiguring subjects and objects as concretized shares having both material and immaterial value. Thinking as eventful emergence provides immersion in life's complexities, potentials, and temporalities, as well as in the complexity of capital processes such as the creation of derivatives. Consequently, I will continue thinking the ontogenetic processes of life, Simondon's modes of individuation, what Deleuze and Guattari call *haecceity* or "thisness," *agencement*, planes of consistency, and what Foucault called the aesthetics of existence in the ontology of the present, as techniques to think processes of subjectification/subjectivation. Instead of transacted individuals ready to be securitized or marshalled to honor debts, we need transindividuals.

I have been documenting in the last three chapters how the reorganization of the state leads to new human subjectivities, the market human, the utilitarian human, and a sense of existence based on financial transactions. They fill in the void of the reorganization of social justice along market metrics. As subjectification and subjectivation are two strategies for formulating agency by enfiguring life, the posthuman, a new form of subjectivity for epistemological purposes, is as susceptible to these techniques of reorganization as are the humanist forms. To address the need to think process, as do process-oriented philosophies, I have emphasized that the expendables, the dispossessed, the impoverished, people of color, women, nonwealthy immigrants, internally displaced people, and so forth are the avant-garde of the disposability of all life within neoliberalism, even those graced with recognized economic subjectivity, culture, or, as I explore in the next section, human rights.[31]

Ahumans do not form political collectivities through networks of indebtedness and the transactional nature of the subject, both of which work well within financial capitalism. Indeed, the main difference between posthuman and ahuman accounts is the former's continued reliance on the techniques of measurement and calculation to determine how central human subjectivism is to all the problems in the world. At the same time, as posthumanism offers new epistemological tools while creating ontologies, it suggests a metaphysical "outside" to the human that many of its adherents, ironically, deride. With the concept of ahumans I do not suggest any such immaculate outside to the human. The political possibilities of the ahuman emerge precisely because these beings coalesce in time through a coming together of disparate forces that often act or become without direction or any means to be thrown under (*subjectum*) the subject.

I discuss next the trafficking and policing of access to human rights, humanitarian legal protections, and the effects of bioengineering and the circulation of organs. Chapter 4 focuses on the rise of neoliberal forms of human rights and humanitarian disasters, which also demonstrate the market orientation to life. Specifically, through analysis of an inchoate formation of humanitarian governmentality and the status of the "undesirables," I explore how human rights concepts actually police the human, and how humanitarians, the best of intentions notwithstanding, may further reify life and foster a generalized economic ontology. Despite their noble goals of ameliorating human suffering and the philanthropic practice of "doing good," humanitarians work too closely with free-market logic and may find themselves facilitating the military interventions they intended to forestall and assuage. Inadvertently, humanitarianism actually fosters more and more subjectivities that will not be protected by the principles and mechanisms humanitarians uphold. In the final analysis humanitarianism further limits the potential for thinking ahumanly. To elaborate this point, we take a legal excursus in our next section on the posthuman qualities of that most secular human entity, the law.

PART II

Human Rights and the Political Reformations of the Market Human

CHAPTER 4

Human Rights and States of Emergency

Humanitarians and Governmentality

Philosopher Peter Sloterdijk and architect Gesa Mueller von der Haegen's installation "Instant Democracy: The Pneumatic Parliament," presented at a 2005 exhibition at the Karlsruhe Center for Art and Media, provides a remarkable critical commentary on the synergy of humanitarian structures, market desires, and how universal claims to human rights use justice for leveraging control. Sloterdijk and von der Haegen's Pneumatic Parliament is a registered design concept that offers airdropped, inflatable parliament buildings that are transparent and mobile, the "architectonic prerequisites" for a democracy to come "after liberation" from the forces of tyranny that currently rule particular sovereign territories. With help from the U.S. Air Force and an unwavering faith in high technology as an end in itself, these structures will be airdropped into "sponsors of international terrorism" (Libya, Iran, Cuba, North Korea, Sudan) or former "outposts of tyranny" (Belarus, Zimbabwe, Myanmar) to allow them to begin work on "Instant Democracy."[1] In "selling" their concept, the creators add: "A further target group of customers are the so-called 'failed states,' countries whose own attempts to democratize have failed, but now with 'democratization from the top-down' get a second chance to erect a proper state system." Countries

"newly liberated" by the humanitarian presence of the U.S. Army, or those eighty to one hundred "failed states" targeted to join what Sloterdijk and von der Haegen ironically call the universal Community of Values, can benefit from the technical expertise of the United States. In countries that receive Pneumatic Parliaments, the air can be colored to emphasize the mood of the country, simultaneously using local knowledge to "make . . . a contribution to spreading the political culture of the west" ("Pneumatic Parliament," 952).

The sardonic commentary of the project creators may be instructive for conceiving the instrumentalization of human rights and how burgeoning humanitarian structures affect legal and epistemological concepts of humanity in the present. The idea of human rights is founded on adherence to universal principles of rules, rights, and norms by member states and individuals who recognize the sanctity of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the validity of international law. However, the difficult question of what universal and particularist agencies will enforce and protect the subjects of rights from unforeseen contingencies has become all the more pressing given that the primary legal organizing unit since the Treaty of Westphalia, the sovereign nation-state, is in flux. The exercising of the law has historically been delimited by the geographical and sovereign borders of nation-states, which must opt into global conventions and treaties or recognize global institutions in order for international law to operate. As I have been arguing with regard to economic ontology, the market human, and utilitarian humanism, the transformation of social spaces, and specifically the juridical zone of the sovereign nation-state, has complicated human rights protections and conceptions of the space of law and jurisdiction. Sloterdijk and von der Haegen's Pneumatic Parliament gestures toward the possible effects, as markets use normative Enlightenment political concepts to create new sovereign subjects who choose to become recognized as human and eligible for human rights protections through adoption of the system of compulsory free markets, underwritten by Kantian ethics. I have been calling such subject formations market humans, those who view social community as if it were a financial derivative, a structure of debt. Sloterdijk and von der Haegen also highlight the market's capacity to turn human rights and democracy into market services, in what Oliver Wendell Holmes named, in a differing context, the "marketplace of ideas," precisely in light of the United States' "humanitarian" invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan. The global market increasingly offers an anti-statist form of governmentality that competes with the Westphalian organization of nation-states, challenging

the state's monopolization of legalized violence, and affecting concepts of human rights.

This chapter will focus on two issues. First, I will analyze the effects of increasing competition between sovereign states and global nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), which come in a variety of forms, from Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, the Red Cross, and Oxfam, to think tanks such as the American Enterprise Institute and Brookings Institution, to the United Nations, transnational corporations, privatized security services, and other regional elements, such as trading blocs. The competition affects how we conceive what has been called an emerging global civil society or, more crudely and erroneously, the decline of the nation-state.[2] I further contend that concepts of sovereignty, rights, and the human are being reimagined along market categories, thus reifying life as an asset along the biases of speculative capital. Second, I look at how the proliferation of nonstate actors, including NGOs, terrorists, and rogue states, facilitates the politicization of human rights around how to recognize who or what is a human being endowed with natural rights, and who is a terrorist or outlaw. As a result, human rights discourses are haunted by the always mutating concept of what types of life are to be recognized as human and deserve to have their natural rights protected, and who can be extinguished with impunity. Given that powerful international actors such as the United States and European nations define human rights regardless of their own spotty records, the issue of how we conceptualize humans is a pressing political concern and affects the Enlightenment categories of legality that still dominate. I analyze how powerful states not only use human rights and humanitarian legitimations for their particularist geopolitical and economic ends, but also strategically direct humanitarian NGOs, employing them to pursue their own interests by proxy.

Humanitarian organizations initially were designed to offer temporary relief in moments of geopolitical crises, but states of perpetual crisis have become the rule. Consequently, powerful political actors may incorporate humanitarian organizations into long-term strategies to extend their scope of military and economic power. Advocates for human rights and humanitarian aid must consider how fluid these operations can be, as hegemonic state actors instrumentalize human rights as operational tools for exercising power. The human has historically been defined by legalistic categories, from the "sovereign" free subject of Cartesian intentionality to the contract form of identity that a human within culture represents in a network of reciprocity. Previous chapters have mapped how the human's epistemological coherence is being transformed and becoming less defined,

except as a transactional form useful for capital extension. In this chapter, I will demonstrate through a discussion of human rights and humanitarianism how human subjectivity is the goal of law as well as the means to circumvent it; I indicate the failures of the politics of recognition in light of economic ontology and, more concretely, how the concept of the subject contains as much as it liberates.

Human Rights as Marketed Structure of Feeling

Humanitarians argue for universal protections within the law by expanding concepts of individual rights to the global arena. The statist subject and the juridical subject become the mechanisms through which the sheer fact of being human is recognized: "By consolidating human experience into legal entitlements, human rights strengthens the national governmental structure, and equates the structure of the state with the structure of freedom."[3] The same technique that I've been using to argue, in chapter 1, that the economy and market humans have been equated, and in chapter 2, that culture has fostered utilitarian humans, extends to the law. The focus on individual rights leads to a limited perception of "bad" governments that perpetrate wrongs that can be put right by an always-emerging global civil society that reforms states, the idea parodied by Sloterdijk and von der Haegen's Pneumatic Parliament. The centrality of the state or governmental forces engenders two paradoxical moralizing positions for human rights advocates. On the one hand, they develop hatred of state organizations presumably controlled by illegitimate, rogue, or immoral forces, and desire "good" state forces to be mobilized to protect individual rights. On the other hand, due to entrenched neoliberalist thinking, NGOs are deemed "free" and "good" merely because they are not statist. Building on my earlier analysis of market humans and utilitarian humanism, in this section I chart an emerging unholy alliance within human rights discourses between defenders of sovereignty and defenders of free markets.

The emergence of rights culture from Europe feeds into the struggle between two polar-opposite positions, the universalist and particularist, within human rights, civil law, and humanitarian law. The first position claims that human rights is the only universal or transcendent structure for legal retribution in a world that is currently lacking any other global means. The universalist position is represented institutionally and intellectually by the preamble to the United Nations Charter and by the so-called liberal realist school stemming from the work of Hedley Bull, which assumes an ordered set of norms in a society of states. The so-called universalists rely

on natural human rights claims that can then be incorporated by interlocking networks of positive law protections. Philosopher of law Alain Supiot claims, however, that universalists have a "fundamentalist interpretation of human rights,"[4] and that they call for contracts to replace all forms of human affiliation (family, religious, cultural) within a generalized order of states guided by the uncritical paternalism of Western liberal democracies.[5] Supiot critically singles out the universalizing and civilizing "mission of the contract" (*Homo Juridicus*, 79–86). In his view, rights and human relations themselves become effects of contractual obligations. The universalist position dominates international relations and human rights discourse, ignoring other forms of solidarity from African and Chinese cultural traditions that do not operate within this legalistic worldview.

As I have discussed in previous chapters on the reification of life and market humans, on culture and utilitarian humanism, and on the transactional structure of subjectivity, the idea that a universal property of human being-in-the world may be protected by contracts may work all-too-efficiently, even dangerously, in consonance with neoliberal economics. The United Nations, the International Criminal Court, and the World Trade Organization are perhaps the only global organizations that can aspire to universal applicability and jurisdiction. While it seems strange to put on the same footing the prosecution of crimes against humanity and fair-trade practices in global markets, they are dominant organizational universals based on the honoring of contracts. While admittedly protection of the rights of the self-owning subject (the right to have rights) and protection of the intellectual property rights of Facebook or Disney occupy vastly different moral registers, in the eyes of the world court or world market they are curiously legally equivalent, both being subject to equal protection clauses. In practice, as legal scholar Upendra Baxi has recently warned, "The paradigm of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is being steadily, but surely, supplanted by that of a trade-related, market-friendly human rights."[6] The proliferation of intellectual property laws after the 1994 Uruguay round of the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS), in which copyright and patent laws have borrowed heavily from human rights discourses to make states' and individuals' practices more market-friendly, embodies this claim for Baxi. The increasing synergy between the roles of the market and of human rights as agents of universal judgment leads anthropologist Talal Asad to contend:

> Who is to be counted as human, what the capabilities are of the human subject, will be decided through the global market in which

> property rights and cost-benefit analysis are central. Human rights become floating signifiers that can be attached to or detached from various subjects and classes constituted by the market principle and designated by the most powerful nation-states.[7]

According to Asad, in secularist worldviews rights become the universal remedy for traditional cultures that get in the way of the normative universal (Western) subject and its organizations, including the global market; his argument is not unlike the one I have been offering with regard to the capture of the human. The circular logic of human rights—the rights humans have by being human—establishes continuities and coherences as a mode of immunization against inconsistencies and disjunctions, the messiness of state politics, reactionary religious or cultural beliefs, and economic actors. Rights-talk dangerously can become universal "rightspeak," demanding universal consensus on rights while subordinating the human subject to a particularist (Euro-American) figuration as a sovereign transactional legal entity. Rights are a floating signifier that gets fixed by those able to exercise power and control; in the process, human rights can become, for example, the way to establish how some particularist humans connected to power exercise more rights than others. In the process, the values of political liberalism and free markets are reasserted as the only universal values, and formalize what I have been calling economic ontology.

Critics of the universalist position on human rights such as Asad identify the idea of universal human rights as the expression of white or Western European justice, used to legitimate the continued domination of Western Europe (and of course of the United States) over the globe, and argue instead for particularist cultural traditions or social rights based on laws on the local, national, or regional level. Particularist arguments also stridently argue for the importance of cultural difference when weighing rights. Defenses of particularist social rights have periodically caricatured "universal" human rights as merely the rights particularisms of the West or of Europe, universalized to the detriment of all other particularisms. On the other hand, universalists have charged that particularist cultural alternatives may be incompatible with human rights and democracy. Former Singapore Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew and China's leaders have often justified oppression of their peoples as merely the practice of a local cultural tradition. Alain Supiot takes on this issue, but he shifts the particularist arguments from social and cultural identities to a critique of the naturalization of "rights culture," which neglects to conceive other forms of human solidarity. He shows that cultures of the Book—Christian,

Islamic, and Judaic—share belief in a structured world governed by universal laws that are not universally shared by other cultures. Yet "the fact that non-Western civilizations have had to, or still have to, adopt Western legal ideas creates the illusion that they have been converted to our legal culture. But this fails to understand that the idea of law was either simply imposed by colonial powers or else imported as a necessary condition for trade with the West, and in no way expresses the human or social values of the civilization" (*Homo Juridicus*, 190).

At the same time, Supiot is skeptical of particularist social rights arguments that assume that social rights will somehow be able to avoid incorporation within flexible power structures. He warns that social rights arguments are based on the concept of a proper place for all incarnations of human subjectivity; to protect intellectual property they advocate for the same universal structural organization as the World Trade Organization. Both social rights arguments and those by the WTO rely on being able to trace the true or original identity of the entity, whether the entity is an indigenous person or a handbag by Coach®. Supiot recognizes that corporations have many more resources to exercise power and determine value than *homo sapiens*, yet they will be seen ontologically as equal before the law.

Supiot supplements the two poles of human rights discourse, universalism and particularism, by a third that he calls *scientism*, whereby "dogmas of biology or economics" become "the true laws of human behavior" (*Homo Juridicus*, 193, 197). In Supiot's view, scientism can lead to human rights messianism or fundamentalism, wherein particularisms are taken to be ontological facts about the human as a species or as an economic being. For Supiot, human rights fundamentalism creates essentialist assumptions about the human, reducing possible interpretations of rights to dogmatic universalisms or particularisms, rather than actual interconnections of differing ideas. As a result, alternative treatises on rights and solidarity, such as the 1981 African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, have been neglected.[8] Through scientism, one version of the human, now taken to be scientific fact, becomes universalized yet again, in a move that denies the historical and hegemonic privileges of Europe and Enlightenment thought that underwrite universal human rights. The human reborn as the universal subject of history, ethics, justice, and law denies its historical European particularism, a particularism underlined by the often overlooked fact that English and French are the normative languages of universal human rights discourses.

The messianic quality of human rights, what David Kennedy, in a critique of Michael Ignatieff, diagnosed as the danger of human rights idolatry, considers only the positive aspects of universal human rights and neglects

the arrogance of a universal ethics that unwittingly may decide what are the possibilities of justice and ultimately police its implementation on a universal scale. Idolatry, a metaphysical faith in a structure for good, is driven by idealism and a will to formalize principles through normalizing rules to generate a status quo of legitimate legalities; it can annihilate cultural particularisms through legal formalism and statist solutions.

The particularism/universalism/scientism division I have outlined is fraught with paradoxes of power that are often smoothed over by legalism and what I diagnose as the fetishization or reification of sovereignty. I will use the work of Weimar legal scholar, Nazi sympathizer, and nationalist theorist of the 1920s and 1930s, Carl Schmitt, to explore this fetishization. Schmitt is a fascinating historical figure for his defense of the Westphalian political system around institutional legalism, amid the ruins of the utopian faith in the League of Nations and the realpolitik balance-of-power regime of sovereign nation-states after World War I. Schmitt also witnessed the formalization of the human rights system and the emergence of international mechanisms of redress, such as the 1948 Declaration of Human Rights and the establishment of human rights NGOs such as Amnesty International to advocate for previously unrepresented constituencies, due to the mass genocides perpetrated by forces he once supported. Schmitt embodies the dangers of the idolatry of particularism and scientism through his "political theology" of sovereignty, which ironically universalizes a synergy between legalism and politics that has enticed critics from both the Left and Right of the political spectrum. Schmitt symbolizes further how particulars can be taken to be universals, leading to a vicious circle that is "resolved" when naturalized by the avowedly objective language of science.

Schmitt is one of the principal defenders of sovereignty and governance at the organizational level of the state; he naturalizes legalistic arguments concerning human rights from a particularist position. He ironically predicted the danger of forces using the sovereign and positivistic logic of the political to monopolize the concept of the human as universal, as well as transformations in the Westphalian social order. Politics relies, for Schmitt, on the Hobbesian capacity to generate a friend-enemy distinction, to mark a boundary within which sovereign force can be exercised, historically through the trinity of nation, state, and territory—the formalization of what was discussed above with regard to particularism as sovereignty in the process of becoming. For Schmitt, writing between the two world wars, politicization is incompatible with the concept of universal humanity:

> Humanity as such cannot wage war because it has no enemy, at least not on this planet. The concept of humanity excludes the concept of the enemy, because the enemy does not cease to be a human being—and hence there is no specific differentiation in that concept. . . . To confiscate the word humanity, to invoke and monopolize such a term probably has certain incalculable effects, such as denying the enemy the quality of being human and declaring him to be an outlaw of humanity; and a war can thereby be driven to the most extreme inhumanity.[9]

Schmitt advocated the realpolitik of a Westphalian order that relies on a warlike system of competing sovereignties, national identities, and borders; hence, there can never be an enemy of the human being as such, for the species-limit cannot be transcended. Schmitt's work on sovereignty defends particularism and challenges the universalist idea of implementing a natural rights position. He assumes a Machiavellian and Hobbesian struggle between multiple powers, many of whom may consider each other as friends or enemies who enter into contracts. For the legal positivist Schmitt, the daily machinations of politics and legal contracts would get obliterated by universalist fictions, whether these fictions concerned markets, universal humanity, or a global cosmopolitan society, and even if such fictions merely functioned as regulatory ideas:

> Humanity is not a political concept, and no political entity or society and no status corresponds to it. . . . Humanity according to natural law and liberal-individualistic doctrines is a universal, i.e., all-embracing, social ideal, a system of relations between individuals. . . . In this universal society there would no longer be nations in the form of political entities, no class struggles, and no enemy groupings. (*Concept of the Political*, 54–55)

Schmitt indicates the impossibility of a universal humanitarian governmentality as political or legal; instead, there would be interlocking networks of interests guided by a universal regulative principle of human dignity. But for Schmitt, the idolization of humanity could lead powerful particularist political actors to horrific violence, denying the enemy the quality of being human in the name of protecting humanity, a reality we currently behold with the purportedly humanitarian interventions of the United States and European alliances in Afghanistan, and putatively in Iraq and Libya.

Convinced of the dangers of a universalist position, Schmitt ironically gravitated to authoritarianism and dictatorship as a way to guarantee

particularist sovereign legacies,[10] specifically nationalist ones, against free-floating "liberal-individualistic" universalisms.[11] While we are familiar with the devastating consequences of Germany's nationalist particularism for much of Europe during World War II, it is important to remark that Schmitt's defense of particularism may have much in common theoretically with anticolonial and national independence movements' declarations of legal rights in the midst of decolonization or the fragmentation of nation-states that were initially created by colonial occupiers. Indeed, national independence movements rely on cultural particularist arguments in order to formalize political wills, claiming the individual rights of their particularism freed from a dominant colonialist particularism or a universal formation. Krishna Menon, the Indian Defense Minister in the early 1960s, advocated the legal recognition of anticolonial struggles and national independence movements, leading eventually to Additional Protocol 1 of 1977, which extends the protections offered by the Geneva Conventions to nonstate actors. The proliferation of nonstate actors, particularly in the wake of the decolonization movements after World War II, created a set of actors who in their struggles for self-determination could not declare war because they lacked a recognized government. Menon's efforts were in part directed toward challenging colonial powers' attempts to avoid human rights guidelines during hostilities with decolonizing forces and their practice of destroying whatever infrastructure or legal provisions were in place in order to decimate the decolonizing forces.

Although Schmitt and Menon held vastly different political positions, both were committed to forms of politicization through the connecting of subjectivities to mechanisms of nation, state, and territory legitimated by the pragmatics of power. They make arguments for deinstitutionalizing historical legal subjectivities from existing structures in order for them to be recreated into new legal subjectivities. They both count on the idea of sovereign power as the foundation of political legitimacy, and both of them idolize sovereignty, bestowing on it a type of almost magical power, thereby limiting justice to state mechanisms. In his 1922 *Political Theology*, Schmitt idolizes contracts and unique individuals such as dictatorial sovereigns who decide on "the exception," the state of emergency that calls for suspension of the rule of law. In his view, dictators can institutionalize norms and laws more effectively than parliaments through strong decisionism and moral absolutes, qualities that are demonstrated by presidential executive orders in the United States; they have no need for complex partnerships of governmental and nongovernmental forms in their development of institu-

tional structures. Schmitt's subsequent support for the Nazis shows the potential dangers of reaction against universalism in his use of consequentialist arguments. Indeed, such arguments justify the most horrific acts in the name of national security. The motive does not matter, only the result. A highly particularist cultural and national identity—the German Aryan ideal and attendant anti-Semitism and obsession with racial purity—was institutionalized through the Nuremberg Laws, and led to the genocidal annihilation of others.[12] Although we are far from the enactment of a functional legal equivalent to the Nuremberg Laws, these very same particularlist mechanisms and consequentialist arguments have been employed in the service of Donald Trump's unilateral U.S. action in geopolitical affairs, and the targeting of immigrants to the United States (coded as nonwhite or Muslim) through executive orders, to "make America great again."

The idolization of sovereignty may also develop among advocates of social and human rights who view legal enfranchisement within human rights as the de facto solution to problems of repressive governments. In the process, human rights can be used to justify one cultural or ethnic particularism over another, as Schmitt once ironically warned. At the same time, *contra* Schmitt, in troubled regions of the world ever-more-specific, entrenched and policed cultural subjectivities fight for sovereign control, with the potential to lead to "ethnic cleansing" as one group tries to achieve control through the annihilation of the other, a danger that Foucault diagnosed with regard to what he called "state racism."[13] Interestingly enough, through a mixture of pragmatism and idolatry, Schmitt marks the theological dimension of sovereignty, a point he gives positive valence in his political theology: "All significant concepts of the modern theory of the state are secularized theological concepts" (*Political Theology*, 36). Ironically, through his defense of sovereignty, he shows how the institutionalizing of power through theological structures mobilizes particularisms that are taken to be universals as they are used to police the "scientific" fact of the human.

My encounter with Schmitt emphasizes the dangers of thinking politicization only in terms of juridical sovereign categories that need to establish good norms to enact changes in governed populations. Emergent political formations aiming to liberate new identities through the assertion of human rights are still immersed within fluctuating networks of power relations that are struggling to become "true," legitimate sovereign formations. In chapter 2 on utilitarian humanism I described this very same issue at work, whereby sovereign cultures within specific nation-states are precisely those deemed the most utilitarian and capable of functioning within transactional categories. As Alain Supiot warns, this can produce an

unequal human rights relativism in the name of universal tolerance: "Whether intended for internal or international consumption, human-rights relativism is always decked out in the appealing garb of universal tolerance. But it is always built on the belief that, if all cultures are in principle of equal value, the one that guarantees this equal value is necessarily worth more than the others" (*Homo Juridicus*, 197). This passage shows the dangers of idolatry or unthinking pragmatism using the positive values of tolerance and human rights equality to mask unequal power relations. Sovereignty becomes its own end, and human rights become tools for powerful actors to enact atrocities in the name of human rights norms.

I have focused on Schmitt due to what I think is an emergent nostalgia for sovereignty, represented by Giorgio Agamben and some others who have championed Schmitt. Schmitt embodies the uses and abuses of sovereignty. Followers of Schmitt simultaneously see decisionism as the greatest danger for freedom, while lamenting a perceived loss of sovereign protections that may have existed only in a theoretical utopia due to a proliferation of legalistic exceptions—"sovereign is he who decides on the exception" (*Political Theology*, 3)—or as unrecognized theological, faith-based conceits. At the same time, as we discussed above with market humans, utilitarian humanism, and reified life, transnational corporations in the global market deploy sovereignty discourses to protect the "rights of their brands" and the wealthy, and they attack sovereign nation-states for legal protections extended to workers. The rights of things trump the rights of the workers who make them, regardless of extensions of the human rights system. I have examined how subjectivity has been redefined for market humans, from the basis of principles protecting labor and wages, to freedom for utilitarian identities useful for power, to the characteristic of the derivative-like humans of financial capital, transactional beings who structure themselves like assets and honor debts. Extending sovereign protections is no guarantee of particularist or universalist emancipation or freedom, as nongovernmental and governmental forces advocate for human rights. Yet the faith in sovereign structures may make any democracies to come both sovereign-legalistic and market-friendly, regardless of how many members of their populations are subjugated and dispossessed along the way.

Wendy Brown further complicates the equation of agency with legal categories by describing how the theological dimension of sovereignty, namely the desire for an overarching power, is itself being outsourced to "capital and God-sanctioned political violence."[14] The loss of a belief in a sovereign power has led to generalized anxiety about threats penetrating the body politic through the twin supranational forces of capitalism and

terrorism. Brown contends that the ineffective and exorbitantly costly walls that are proliferating, erected to clarify national borders, are ways of symbolically recreating territorial borders; meant to restore the dominion of national sovereignty, these material structures are intended as defenses against the global circulation of people and goods that diminishes sovereign power. The idea of a United States–Mexico border wall exemplifies the desire to keep illegal immigrants out of the United States while maintaining the possibility of cheap goods and services, built on unprotected labor. The need for security, protection, and strong decisionism creates increased policing of the sovereign subject in the name of its protection and institutes a friend-enemy distinction symbolically expressed by the edifice of the wall. However, sovereign states cannot reduce immigration flows or combat terrorist acts merely through physical structures; they would have to restructure the economic order to remove incentives for hiring precarious immigrants with minimal access to state protections. Similarly, no security wall could have stopped the September 11 attacks. However, walls may provide the illusion of security and some form of psychic relief from anxiety and fear within a delimited geographical terrain. As a result, despite their ineffectiveness and concomitant abridgement of individual rights, walls become symbols of structured, sovereign order and purification of the nation.

The strategies of containment and policies for restoring the community through the wall exemplify what Brown calls the "theatricality of sovereignty." Universal human rights represent an attempt, I think, at such a theatrical gesture in our burgeoning humanitarian moment. The *human* in human rights and the prosecution of crimes against *humanity* may function as theatrical gestures that specific nation-states exploit to bolster a concept of universal humanity at a moment when the rallying cries of international cooperation and humanism are losing their monopoly. Universal human rights restore legal intelligibility in a deterritorialized world. The market logic of property, which has undergirded individual rights and the demesne of law, is essential for the coherence of the concept of the *human* of human rights. The financial market's deterritorialization of space and thus of property unravels the sovereign fixture of the human, affecting the exercising of human rights, and may alter our understanding of humanitarianism. I discuss below how humanitarianism may function as a deterritorialized form of governmentality that offers a theatrical illusion of protection and security, while in reality structurally undermining their possibilities. In the next section I posit that the proliferation of humanitarian institutions is the flipside of the breakdown of state sovereignties in the wake of the end of

the Cold War. States increasingly outsource sovereign functions to humanitarian organizations as a cost-cutting measure, demonstrating the intensification of free-market logic in everyday life. This marks a way in which human rights and the laws of war actually render members of the species as posthuman in order to kill them, indicating the need for another way of thinking agency in light of contemporary legal protections and how state and nonstate actors exploit them. First, we need to establish the cozy relationship between humanitarians and war.

Lawfare and the Humanitarians

Humanitarian interventions often work through humanitarian-military alliances, with such state actors as the United States increasingly using human rights arguments to legitimize military intervention. David Kennedy contends that this is nothing new; sailors aboard the aircraft carrier USS Independence have a better sense of humanitarian and human rights law than most transnational entities. According to Kennedy, who served as a civilian instructor with the U.S. Naval Justice School Detachment for International Training, an organization educating fifty-three countries on humanitarian law,

> It turns out that the American military is by far the world's largest human-rights training institution. Across the globe, engagement with the US military—purchasing our weapons, participating in joint exercises with our forces—comes with training in the international norms and regulatory practices of humanitarian law and human rights.[15]

Indeed, military lawyers use human rights to determine the very field of possibility for war, what targets are bombed and who is a combatant, as well as using numerous cost-benefit analyses on targets of opportunity. (This may be where the sovereign decision about the exception—who lives and who dies—is now exercised, as military lawyers exercise the decision regarding the limits of force for strategic ends, without being guided necessarily by the long-term military or state goal.) As Kennedy points out, humanitarians who oppose war and judge advocates/military lawyers speak the same language of human rights, even if from different perspectives. Both use the law, according to Kennedy, as a commercial asset to influence and plead the case of imprecise rules and procedures. Indeed, awareness of law marks what Kennedy calls *lawfare*, the management of war within the terms of international law, a strategic assessment of various assertions and productive strategies by military and humanitarian actors to

frame a situation to their advantage.[16] As a result, the transcendent claim of justice and such abstractions as human dignity are rarely weighed, in light of the immanent and imminent strategic need to avoid bad press due to the collateral damage of dead innocents.

This latitude, coupled with advances in technology, such as remote-controlled drone strikes, dramatizes a change in social organization whereby state actors such as the United States may use the entrenchment of legal modes in order to circumvent them.[17] According to Peter Singer, for example, to avoid allegations of possible human rights violations in the war on terror, the United States has deployed certain private military companies, which need not follow the Uniform Code of Military Justice.[18] Powerful states such as the United States exploit the distinctions between a state of war and a state of peace because they are based on identifying and classifying the actors, which in light of wars on terror, with such targets as Al Qaeda or ISIS, allows for great flexibility. Indeed, because Al-Qaeda and ISIS are franchises appearing in many states rather than a specific nation-state, they have been defined as terrorist and outside the law. Consequently, their members cannot claim humanitarian/war law protections because they are not legitimate legal subjects in the international community. In the realm of lawfare, the rules, norms, and laws for state actors may be used to define what are deemed legitimate and illegitimate networks of force and to determine which norms establish who can be considered a legal party. Such decisions determine the limits of political agents and ultimately police the human and individual rights, determining who will be recognized as a human subject and subjected to the law.

U.S. legal teams and the military in the endless "war on terror" have readily created new legal subjectivities and identities within positive law, as well as new subjectivities and identities that throw certain humans outside these legal protections. Former U.S. Air Force Major General Charles J. Dunlap, Jr. normalized lawfare as an essential U.S. strategy during the war on terror and its rebranded formation during the Obama administration as Overseas Contingency Operations.[19] The war on terror gestures toward human rights and humanitarian causes, strategically mixing *jus ad bellum* (reasons for going to war) and *jus in bello* (rules for how war is waged) to justify penetrating the sovereignty of nation-states, to free populations in Iraq or Libya, for example, or oppressed women in Afghanistan, bringing ever more spaces and places into "the civilized world."[20] In the process, sovereign decisions on who is human and who is not are made—who is worthy of protection, who will receive humanitarian aid, who will relocate to refugee camps, and so forth. At the same time, maintaining the integrity

of sovereignty can be evoked to justify actions such as extraordinary rendition or to deny *habeas corpus* rights to those imprisoned at Guantanamo Bay who are considered "enemy combatants" and, in effect, rendered stateless, without legal protections. They may no longer rely on the idea of natural rights belonging to human status because they are no longer legally human. Human rights and humanitarian law can serve the political functions of a sovereign state such as the United States, or the media fiction of the "international community," in policing which particular humans are considered stateless, and which are considered normatively human. And this has serious ramifications legally, epistemologically, and ethically, for what forms of life are recognized as human through statist legal categories.

I have been arguing in this chapter that human rights must deal with changing concepts of sovereignty and legal subjectivities, so important to maintain a rule of law for recognizing and potentially honoring treaties and to designate which persons are enemy combatants, which are civilians. The war on terror exploits the fluid distinction between aggressors and peacekeepers (or restorers of order). The distinction frequently entails factual, immanent, and episodic judgments, rather than recourse to a transcendent authority or body, regardless of the International Criminal Court or United Nations. Human rights advocates must acknowledge that their cozy relationship with powerful militaries has resulted in humanitarian interventions using the language of rights to justify neocolonial projects that often intensify human suffering. Thereby the humanitarian structure regularizes the relationship of war and law and can police the human, while rendering more and more populations as nonhuman objects, in ways that object-oriented ontologists never seems to address in their ongoing hunt for subjectivism wherever it may lurk. As I described above, human rights, which operate as the entitlement of a free human subject, are equated with property rights, not unlike what I discussed in chapter 1 with regard to the market human. These sovereign rights are secured only by the protection of property by powerful state actors, and there are areas of the world where that role is fulfilled by the U.S. military. Nevertheless, both the U.S. military and nonstate actors, including the privatized military—in a word, mercenaries—to whom the United States outsources conflicts may claim to be protecting human rights in engaging in humanitarian invasions, for noble or imperial reasons. While human rights laws try to alleviate human suffering and provide the conditions of possibility for oppressed peoples to seek redress, through the legal architecture and production of subjectivities, they also create those exceptions to equal protection. These exceptions are exacerbated by the increased outsourcing of humanitarianism by

powerful state actors like the U.S. and European Union. States and the concept of sovereignty focus on subjectivities with access to property, but with neoliberalism and financialization, space and place are fluid, flexible and unmoored, and produce subjectivities to that end. This creates a legal lifeworld in which Disney's *Frozen* and a refugee from Syria have the same legal standing, but only one can marshal market forces to protect its right to exist. Ironically, state actors, those viewed as legitimate in international law and who can monopolize force to enforce rights, are themselves undermined by the procedures of lawfare. They must now compete with nonstate actors, including corporations, NGOs, and privatized armies and militias, which render permeable the lines of legitimate and illegitimate, "good" and "bad," uses of force.

Lawfare has created a situation whereby the rules of engagement and legitimation for war claim a democratic rationale, and the ends of war are often marketed as freedom and human rights, thus showing a dangerous liaison between humanitarianism and lawfare. I will discuss next how the normalization of human rights and humanitarian discourses can throw more and more people into the condition of statelessness. Extending the law while engaging in war transforms state and nonstate actors, paradoxically designating more and more humans as outlaws or as stateless, as refugees. The stateless by their sheer existence problematize human rights claims; they fall on the wrong side of the equation. Let us explore why many stateless rail against humanitarian organizations that become their masters in the gap between different geopolitical strategies.

Humanitarianism and States of Emergency

Given the legal conundrums outlined above, it is not surprising that there has emerged desire for a universal agent or legal mechanism to keep things together to protect universal humanity. The United Nations' human rights system does provide an interesting attempt to do so, even if, according to Michel Feher, it is "powerless by design" because individual states put their own interests before those of the abstraction of universal humanity.[21] Critics of humanitarian structures, from David Kennedy to David Rieff, have pointed out that those who are invested in the expansion of human rights often focus on a narrow legalism that does not actually improve people's lives, but benefits the humanitarian organizations' own extension. Rieff has commented, "to me it remains not just an open question, but a question that desperately needs to be asked, what this [extension of human rights norms] has actually accomplished for people in need of justice, or aid, or

mercy, or bread, and whether it has actually kept a single jackboot out of a human face."[22]

Humanitarian organizations are inextricably linked both with wars and business, as indicated by Swiss businessman Henry Dunnant's lobbying for what would become the International Committee of the Red Cross and the first Geneva Convention in 1864. The majority of humanitarian organizations were founded at a time when nation-states were insufficient for protecting the minority populations within their territories, as was the case in Western Europe during the breakdown of the Ottoman Empire; humanitarian organizations filled the gap between competing national interests of the Westphalian order.[23] They were guided by religious teachings in the Judeo-Christian tradition about alleviating human suffering. From their beginning, these organizations have exhibited market-based altruism, relying on financial donations and volunteers, while claiming positions of neutrality and political nonalignment, though the majority of the monies, staff, and volunteers come from Western countries. Most major humanitarian organizations have come into existence to deal with the traumas and human misery after wars or massacres by empires, filling the void as "the rich world's conscience," as David Rieff puts it (*Bed for the Night*, 25). Despite the universal claim to law and human rights, the proliferation of nonstate actors in power politics, including the NGOs of the purported global civil society, paradoxically systematizes extraterritorial legal formations and flexible norms-based systems of incorporation. While human rights NGOs are part of an emerging global civil society and, as I discussed above, legitimate a transactional reality of working for "good," they offer information storehouses and are lobbying entities or "educating organs" for more powerful sovereign states such as the United States, which could enact legal measures or use military force. Humanitarian groups that wish to maintain their neutrality and nonalignment have been exceptionally challenged in light of ecological disasters or large-scale killings, for which powerful militaries are logistically better prepared to intervene than are humanitarian forces. Indeed, NGOs can exercise little power on their own; they must work with militaries in order to frustrate mass killings. In sum, the majority of human rights work entails negotiating with states to alter their behaviors should they engage in inhuman atrocities against members of their populations or against those whom they confront in war; or humanitarian and human rights organizations must lobby states to deploy force in the name of protecting other humans who fall within competing sovereignties. Humanitarians are thereby pulled in one direction by their

need for financial donations, while pulled in another by the necessity of working with militaries for their operational success.

This is not to say that humanitarian work is cynical, but I think it does represent a new form of post-Westphalian, neoliberal, market-based governmentality. Humanitarians are often thrown into impossible situations, for they often come into a nation due to the failure of that nation's government, and must negotiate for specific strategic functions with competing powers that operate in countries that are at war or have suffered disasters. The humanitarians try to alleviate suffering caused by other actors and to aid the surplus populations of refugees, disaster victims, internally displaced people—in short, all the peoples who may be rendered operationally or politically stateless. They offer the logistical, operational, and managerial mechanisms for administering life in the midst of catastrophe, and exercise a form of governmentality through a series of strategies necessary given a breakdown in juridical modes of governing. In this regard, they exercise power over life—Foucault's biopower—regardless of sovereign states. Their governance supplants the sovereign form. The proliferation and professionalization of humanitarian organizations since the end of the Cold War, their offering of competitive salaries and benefits, has increased humanitarian organizations' global power.

However, the majority of funding for NGOs and humanitarian organizations still comes from individual sovereign states that target funding toward operations that are expected to show measurable results. In other words, the instrumentalization of results and data becomes the mechanism through which power is exercised, while the appearance of neutrality and altruism is maintained. According to Michael Barnet and Thomas Weise, this enables nation-states to exercise control by proxy, through humanitarian organizations.[24] It is in this regard that humanitarian NGOs may facilitate the neoliberalist outsourcing of state functions, promote economic ontology, and instrumentalize human life. Indeed, anthropologist Michel Agier calls the humanitarian worker "an agent of exclusion at lesser cost,"[25] who deals with the consequences of such large geopolitical factors as the international arms industries, the ambitions of dominant powers to maintain their comparative advantage with respect to finite resources such as oil, and wars of choice. Consequently, although professing a position of apolitical nonalignment, humanitarian NGOs' funding from primarily Western European and American nation-states limits their abilities to operate without state or regional interests. As a result, selective and regional privileging takes place based on how human rights coincide with

the geopolitical goals of the rich world. As Barnett and Weiss describe, "When wars were raging in the Balkans . . . in per capita terms it was 10–20 times better to be a war victim there than in Africa," due to the proximity of the Balkans to Europe (*Humanitarianism Contested*, 23).

Humanitarian organizations have been resoundingly critiqued by Linda Polman, Alex De Waal, and David Rieff, among others, for in fact extending wars and misery through their alternative governmentality.[26] Polman notes that in Sierra Leone, the warlords and rebels actually committed atrocities, such as hacking off arms, to garner world media attention and bring the global NGOs and their monies into the country. Moreover, warlords deliberately generated more violence in order to ensure the continued presence of the humanitarian NGOs from which they could extract aid, food and prosthetics, which no longer had to be paid for by the government or the rebel groups waging war. They then extracted bribes from humanitarian workers for access to specific regions to administer aid, and used the money to purchase weaponry. Humanitarian aid thereby prolongs misery, in a perverse form of Joseph Schumpeter's discussion of capitalism's "creative destruction" through entrepreneurial activity, the hallmark of what I have described as market humans. Humanitarian and private groups take over the responsibilities and duties of governments, while at the same time paying bribes to governments in order to continue their humanitarian mission and receive more funding. Under humanitarian law, militaries are expected to protect and secure citizens and innocents, but now that can be outsourced to humanitarian organizations. Thus, a mutually beneficial entrepreneurial relationship is perversely created, ironically through the destruction of more human lives. Humanitarian organizations receive more funding to take care of those affected in military zones. They grow larger and more extensive with each disaster. They often have minimal accountability, for they do their own self-assessments and report back to their clients, the militaries or governments who commission them. Meanwhile, militaries are freed to continue to their next targets of opportunity without having to worry about the humanitarian crisis in the aftermath.

Humanitarian organizations must follow neoliberal market logics, as they, too, must compete for necessary funding. Seven transnational NGOs dominate the humanitarian market.[27] As larger entities, they can keep out competition for funding, which, coupled with the professionalization of such organizations, their offering of competitive salaries and benefits, creates a situation in which disaster and human suffering are "good for business." For example, NGOs and humanitarians deploy atrocities as marketing strategies for donations, exploiting so-called disaster pornography.[28] Fund-

raising for humanitarian causes may not only exploit human suffering but also unwittingly prolong wars. This perversely creates an incentive to expand humanitarianism in partnership with militaries into newer sectors, and can have serious repercussions with respect to what have been called wars of choice, such as the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq during the "war on terror."

Michel Agier describes these emerging formations, specifically around refugee camps, as "humanitarian government," the synergistic relationship between UN organizations such as the Office of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) and other NGOs to administer life biopolitically. For Agier, humanitarian government is "at a minimum a descriptive concept: each camp is governed by a series of organizations that locally exercise sovereign power. It becomes a theoretical concept in the sense that it can be literally abstracted from any specific terrain in order to conceive the totality (invisible as such) of the global humanitarian apparatus" (*Managing the Undesirables*, 203). Humanitarian government is a flexible model of organization and governmentality that can be deployed in crises or employed by nation-states for specific strategic advantages. The UNCHR commissions NGOs, consequently, to oversee the various tasks of feeding, clothing, and offering health services to the stateless under UNCHR's protection. The stateless often live in the chasm between transforming sovereignties; they cannot leave the camps because they inhabit extraterritorial zones of administration within sovereign nation-states. Indeed, those who are rendered stateless also effectively lose their "human status" as rights-bearing individuals while in the camp. They must seek their human rights or humanitarian protection in the camps in which they are warehoused because there is no sovereign territory to which they may lay claim for protection. Residing on the threshold of competing forms of governance, they become what Giorgio Agamben has termed "naked life" (*zoē*), forms of life seeking political recognition (*bios*) that only happens within the confines of the camp overseen by humanitarian organizations.[29] Agier describes the proliferation of camps to house what he calls the "undesirables" and how these sites become mobile sovereignties, extraterritorial legal zones in nation-states at war that function as transit centers or buffer states to control flows of economic or political refugees (*Managing the Undesirables*). The camps replace the political sovereignties of nation-states with administrative rule or management as governmentality, a neoliberal form of governance.

The stateless increasingly are protected theatrically and practically through the extrasovereign powers of humanitarian organizations. While

the camps are designed for the protection of the stateless, a side effect is that they become mechanisms for containment and policing; indeed, the camps govern the populations who dwell within while providing humanitarian services. The proliferation of camps for the global total of 50 million refugees indicates that though they were created as spaces of exception in times of political transformation, the camps are becoming the rule (Agier, *Managing the Undesirables*). They gain permanence for dealing with "undesirables" and extend humanitarian governments that render biopolitical decisions on who lives and dies, while administering distressed populations who are functionally stateless.

Policing the Humans

The pervasiveness of humanitarianism and the proliferation of refugee camps and new legal subjectivities create categories of existence by which to recognize the stateless. However, the stateless increasingly fall into the gaps of universal legal protections, showing the continued importance of the sovereign nation-state (if for no other reason than marking the limits of the law); paradoxically, a series of peoples are created who are now unrecognized by any state. The stateless peoples who cannot be assimilated into a national or state organization, who cannot be repatriated, are refugees who persist in a kind of no-human zone. They are objects at the interstices of the sovereign laws of domestic nation-states as well as of state and nonstate actors in international law. These stateless further demonstrate why conferring on humans the status of objects has dangerous political ramifications, beyond the posthuman, post-anthropocentric aims of OOO discussed in the last chapter. Internment camps, concentration camps, or refugee camps for displaced people emerge to fill the legal vacuum for populations who do not have access to any sovereign state's law, even if they are inadequately protected.

The enfranchisement of nonstate actors to enact governmental policies, coupled with the law's fluidity and territorial flux, has thus dramatically affected the stateless. The Bush administration's actions during the war on terror provide further evidence of how instituted norms may always struggle for universal acceptance even if they are applied by different, often opposing, powers. In neocolonial fashion, humanitarian organizations may assume that the human is coterminous with the values of Europe and the United States, so only these areas are worthy of conferring or protecting rights. In sum, we have a particularist normative concept of the human vying for universal status, which uses human rights discourse to police its

concepts of the human. By the same token, in the realm of lawfare, if humanitarian NGOs had access to vast amounts of money, theoretically they could cut out the middlemen of nation-states and hire private militias to engage in the process of peacekeeping or intervention. Indeed, this may be a future possibility, as the United States privatizes vast swathes of its public sphere including the military, leading to dramatic reconceptualization of how human rights operate and who is subject to and subjected by the law, even on U.S. territory, given immigration. The vision of competing nonstate actors as humanitarian governments devoid of political force is a nightmare from which humanitarians on the ground would undoubtedly like to awaken. Yet this vision also shows that conceiving the human is a political act, a reality that should not be forgotten by human rights advocates who consider legal mechanisms only for protection, or by posthumanists who in their arguments have abandoned the human, and, in my estimation, the political.

Humanitarian organizations lack accountability, but they are flexible and ready to move to the next emergency. Yet they also govern life by conferring on all who are inside the camps they oversee a form of subjectivity, that of the absolute victim without any political agency whatsoever. The image of the absolute victim helps humanitarian organizations increase their budgets and extend their purview of action into such areas as policing and military operations; persons who are thus seen are thrown outside the space of humanist subjectivity, a position that as stateless figures they already inhabit. Furthermore, governments in Western Europe and the Americas make it increasingly difficult to recognize refugees legally—an unintended consequence of humanitarian governmentality. Indeed, much like the legal teams of the Bush administration during the war on terror, European governments have been creating a series of legal categories to deny responsibility for, or protection of, the human rights of the stateless. More and more governments want to deny refugee status, to avoid having to honor requirements outlined in the Geneva Convention of 1951. This situation has been particularly horrific in light of the refugee crisis in Europe after the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan and the civil wars in Syria. Two of the largest donors to NGOs are the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO), the humanitarian wing of the European Union, and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID); they embody how governmental functions are outsourced to nongovernmental agencies, while the superpowers' interests are still protected. Agier has remarked that "the decline (observed since the early 2000s) in the official figure for persons coming under the category of

'refugees' corresponds to an actual increase in other categories: IDPs [internally displaced persons] and such substitute categories as 'territorial asylum,' 'humanitarian asylum,' 'temporary protection,' etc." (*Managing the Undesirables*, 21–22). Persons who are placed under these new humanitarian categories of subjectivity, such as IDP, are without international legal protections; they are not considered eligible for the refugee protections established by the 1951 Convention on Refugees and the 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees. Use of these new categories allows nations to avoid spending money ensuring the rights of refugees within their territories and renders more and more people stateless. The superpowers outsource the problem to humanitarian organizations who receive the majority of funding from these very same sovereign nations. These techniques represent the entrenchment of neoliberal governance.

Agier's analysis of humanitarian governance returns us full circle to the introduction to this chapter and suggests that Sloterdijk and von der Haegen's parody, the Pneumatic Parliament, may in fact be too optimistic, for it assumes a political agent. The camp structures that have been virtually airdropped from above by the "Community of Values" to protect refugees, disaster victims, and others affected by war offer, *pace* Wendy Brown, merely the theatricality of protection. For the danger is that the refugee camps created by humanitarian organizations to house stateless others will connect with lawfare under a truly universal jurisdiction. In the process, they will expedite the transformation of human rights into a transactional reality, another marketing slogan akin to Sloterdijk and von der Haegen's democracies from above, but this time rendering humans into humanitarian objects on which to speculate, into new marketing opportunities. The camps turn democratic promise into a lot of hot air that can be colored through local practices, while one of the few growth industries in the Euro-Americas is the production of stateless people. No longer entitled to rights, such people can only have security when embraced by humanitarian nongovernmental organizations that have already been contracted by powerful state actors to manage them.

These past few chapters have diagnosed the failures of humanism, but also traced the dangers of embracing posthuman critiques of anthropocentrism as ends in themselves to revolutionize the admittedly moribund humanities. I am exploring in this and the next chapter how law reifies life in two manners, problematizing concepts of subjectivity and political agency. First, it reifies justice into the law, so that the law becomes the primary mechanism for achieving justice, a spurious claim that we must nevertheless take seriously due to its ubiquity. Next, legalized life is often

reduced to the categories of the sovereign state, even when states are in open competition with market forces and harnessed by them. In exploring market humans, utilitarian humanism, and human rights and humanitarian organizations I have been diagramming a network of concepts or institutions that have a long history of reifying life, rendering the human into one object among many, with politically dangerous effects. My argument has highlighted concrete instances of horrific oppression, namely the creation of "the undesirables" as speculative instruments for futures markets of disaster, resulting in the proliferation of humanitarians, NGOs, and nonprofits to reify what forms of life are recognized as human. Such realities offer, nevertheless, new possibilities for thinking life differently, even when these realities put more and more human lives into a precarious situation. Market categories colonize subjectivity and increasingly arrange beings through individualistic categories of self-management as risk management, useful cultures, monetized and fragmented assets, and individual rights holders. Individualistic market categories often frustrate mechanisms for collective protection, to the detriment of any notion of collectivity or belonging together. Nevertheless I think the human, recognized as a disaggregated or transindividuated historical form, provides the possibility for new politicizations. I have been addressing how the presentist techniques of the market use subjectivity to depoliticize, de-institutionalize, and in fact erase possibilities of political agency, and why we need a more dynamic means of thinking beings and life, what I have been referring to as the ahuman. In the next chapter I focus on techniques of language and translation as modes of informing being, both to protect and erase. Chapter 5 will provide important fodder for understanding how language operates ontologically and how it exhibits the inchoate potential aspects of what I call ahumans, because it offers a transactional reality counter to market mechanisms.

CHAPTER 5

Translating Rights

The International Criminal Court, Translation, and the Human Status

On March 6, 2010, the defense counsel for Thomas Lubanga Dyilo, Ms. Catherine Mabille, requested extra time from the judges of the International Criminal Court (ICC) because of concerns about the translations from Swahili to French in the testimony of the prosecution's witness. Mr. Lubanga, a former psychology student, was initially charged with war crimes for conscripting, enlisting, and deploying child soldiers, and he then faced subsequent indictments on aiding and abetting sexual slavery in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The NGO Human Rights Watch claimed that Lubanga led the Union of Congolese Patriots (UPC), a militia group that seized the gold-rich Ituri region of northeastern Congo, and supported the Hema ethnic group over the Lendu in the area of Bunia, the region's capital.[1] Lubanga was accused of requiring all families in areas under his militia's control to donate something of value: money, a cow, or a child to support his regime. Children would be armed as child soldiers or forced into sexual slavery. Lubanga was a singular representation of terror for his "crimes against humanity," mobilizing localized "ethnic hatreds" for political gain and becoming the first human brought before the ICC. The ICC was created to be an independent, permanent court that "tries indi-

viduals charged with the gravest crimes of concern to the international community: genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity."[2] Created over thirty years ago as a corrective to the atrocities in Europe during World War II, the ICC bridges the gap in international humanitarian and human rights law and extends the work of prosecuting war crimes and crimes against humanity after the Nuremberg trials, the Tokyo trials, and the International Criminal Tribunals in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia. It allows the 124 member parties that as of 2017 recognize the Court to bring to justice people who have committed horrific atrocities. The Court represents universal notions of human justice and law, yet is a European construction housed in the Dutch-speaking city of The Hague, and executes international law and justice in English and French, the Court's working languages. As a result, it has been accused of exercising Western justice, a claim buttressed by the fact that all defendants brought before the Court at the time of writing come from the continent of Africa.

Mabille's request for more time for translation puts into stark relief the central role of language and testimony as vehicles for guaranteeing equal protection before the law. Given that Lubanga was the first person tried before the ICC, the Court was highly sensitive to the appearance of racial, ethnic, and geopolitical inequality. However, Mabille's protests concerning translation were just one of many breakdowns in establishing Lubanga's equality before the law, and, I will claim, his ability to be seen as human. The defense was not granted the same level of resources as the prosecution for establishing a legal team and for translating testimony. The prosecution also repeatedly refused to turn over evidence, including the identities of witnesses for the prosecution; it lost key documents of witness testimony, and outsourced witness gathering. Due to these concerns, the case was almost thrown out twice during its seven-year duration, and was only kept in place on appeal.[3] While extreme variations in court reporting and translation are just some of the many concerns brought forward by the defense in this historic trial, I focus in this chapter on the vexing issue of language as evidence (truth claims) and interpretation in the global legal process, as well as the connection between language and racial, ethnic, and cultural difference and their role in embodying the human. I argue that translation, the moving across from one linguistic register to another, provides an often unthought obstruction to exercising equality before the law for those involved in human rights claims and the prosecution of crimes against humanity. The general contingency of language and meaning upsets the notion of transparent and perfect communication even between two people speaking the same language. The indeterminacy of meaning and

the eventfulness of language as an immanent structure within different coded languages are all the more glaring in international legal contexts, where imprecision in testimony or in its linguistic translation can call into question not only the veracity of testimonial evidence, but also the human status of the defendant.

The indeterminacy of language and translation before the law has surprisingly not borne much scrutiny in legal studies, and in my view it may be as significant as issues of jurisdiction, the primary concern of human rights and humanitarian law organized around legalism, as discussed in the last chapter. In Western legal traditions since Aristotle, sovereign powers such as the nation-state have mobilized the category of the human subject as a being capable of language—what distinguishes human beings from animals and machines—and therefore a subject before the law, a juridical subject.[4] The legal denomination for crimes against humanity designates the accused as an "enemy of humankind" (*hostis humani generis*); in other words, the accused individual resides outside the boundaries of humanity, becoming legally and epistemologically posthuman. Following Aristotle's logic, the enemy of humankind does not speak a recognizable language, and has no access to a vehicle of communication. Consequently, I want to explore whether translation problematizes the Aristotelian idea of the human as the animal that becomes political through speech and language, an idea central to humanism and, from an opposing perspective, to posthumanists in their critiques of humanism. To that end, I explore the possible double legal dehumanization of such defendants as Lubanga, in light of the legacy of colonialism in Africa and language. Indeed, language places humans in jurisdictions that may unwittingly normalize an unequal status before the law via the institutionalization of English and French as the *de facto* and *de jure* languages of human rights. The language of rights entails the reincorporation or extension of (neo)colonial structures that ultimately police concepts of humanity, indicating how vexing the question of humanity is. This is due to conceiving translation instrumentally, by reifying language, and in the process denying testimony to defendants. The loss of language happens most explicitly with such defendants as Lubanga brought before the ICC; yet my argument on language also holds in the contexts of specific nations with multilingual populations, such as the United States, and in light of global flows of people in the production of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs), as I discussed in chapter 4. Language's indeterminacy in translation can institutionalize the loss of voice and communicability to those charged with crimes. In the context of crimes against humanity, this indeterminacy can correlatively allow defendants to

be acquitted due to the perception that the ICC is acting like a victor's court or a neocolonial institution. To counter this, I argue for thinking translation as transformation and perpetual subject production and desubjectification, or more concretely, thinking of *translatio* in its most general sense as a transferring or carrying over from one process or multiplicity to another. In sum, I concretely diagnose the arbitrariness of testimony as a way to think seriously about what may be perceived as the arbitrariness of rights—how they can be extended and taken away, and what effects that has for possibilities of human politicization. The production of the legal person is an act of translation, made all the more contingent through the practice of translation in international legal contexts. Given that legality and sovereign subjectivity are being incorporated by market categories—with the shift from citizens to market subjects described in chapter 1, with utilitarian humanism as way for culture to serve market instrumentalities as shown in chapter 2, with the subject functioning like a structured debt explored in chapter 3, and with the production by powerful global actors of such legal subjectivities as internally displaced persons, used to deny refugee status, outlined in chapter 4—translation puts in stark relief how language subjectifies and desubjectifies the species-being. Translation is central to thinking agency differently, including through what I have been calling ahumans, entities produced at each moment through the coagulation of forces. In this chapter I will also speculate about ways in which translation provides a formidable model for thinking how agency may be reconfigured, and these speculations may be instructive for strategies of resistance and politicization against the forces of financialization.

On the Uses and Abuses of Language for Life . . . and Human Rights

As I discussed in chapter 4, the bulk of engagements with human rights and terrorism have focused on the legal machinery of the modern state—the Carl Schmittian role of the decision and the exception, the limits of sovereignty, the proliferation of extrajuridical territories through legal and procedural tenets. Furthermore, humanitarian law, also known as war law, targets the relationship of *jus in bello* (rules of engagement while in war, to protect the innocent) and *jus ad bellum* (the legitimations for acts of war) for state actors.[5] These arrangements acknowledge the central role of the nation, frequently identified by language and ethnicity, as well as the state, the form of organization for governing people who reside in a demarcated territory. Given that human rights and humanitarian law are located at the level of the species, and yet most political and legal systems are organized

by nation-states and interlocking treaties, how does the field of human rights grab universal jurisdiction? This happens through language and acts of figuration that extend the reality of the legal lifeworld. We must consider, therefore, the materialist role of language in establishing and institutionalizing legal appellations that then connect to powerful agents who can affect which figurations have universal dissemination and legal protections, and which do not. Reflecting on these concerns, I highlight translation's materialist operation, specifically how the semiotic indeterminacy of language affects the designation of a legal subject as human, and marks simultaneously the nonhuman or posthuman. I demonstrated in the last chapter how this worked with the creation of more and more subjectivities, such as "enemy combatants" and "internally displaced people," used to eschew legal protections. The majority of translation studies have focused only on the ways in which language and translation affect the interpretive process of the law. I consider instead how language naturalizes concepts of the human, institutionalizing and policing regulative concepts such as humanism, and, through its critique, the inchoate franchise of posthumanism. I argue first that language naturalizes all legal groupings based on natural rights, such as human rights, by assuming the givenness of a human. I then transpose these issues to the concrete legal issues brought forward in the case of Lubanga. In this section, I probe the *aporia* that emerges when cultural and local forces affect language, involving the creation of national and/or regional languages and the universal goals of human rights. How do the goals of universal rights and the cultural particularities of language generate tensions for the exercise of law? How do they also reify life, and thereby determine concepts of who and what comprise "legitimate" humanity?

Terry Cochran describes the process of modernity's creation of consciousness with language and the material force of figuration. For Cochran, print culture and the cultures of the book have created the order of knowledge, affecting history, national languages, and the very premise of rationality in science and law based on interpretation. As a result, history, language, and truth, comprised as they are by language and concepts—what he calls "figures of thought"—are also being transformed by new digital technologies and adaptations of institutions that increasingly rely on the televisual and flowing bits of information. Consequently, Cochran stresses the historical materiality of language as figures of thought:

> At the onset of the twenty-first century, the question of historical intervention takes on unforeseen meanings, largely because of the

> historical conjuncture itself, the clash in worldviews and the technological means that diffuse them. At this juncture, figures plot new trajectories for materialist history. Recognition that truth and its mobilizing figures are not discovered but made, products of an unsteady evolution whose linguistic and ideological foundations have been forgotten or suppressed, brings thought down from the heavens and shows thinking's porousness to sociopolitical institutions. Even in terrestrial paradise, cut off from transcendental illusions, institutions are more than simply the buildings that have doors, locks, fenced-in-lawns, and local police. They are also nonempirical institutions composed of language, concepts, and figures—figures that serve as protagonists of worldviews, galactic and merely planetary.[6]

For Cochran, the mobilization of concepts and figures in language creates institutions and alters human agency itself. Language enfigures reality in modernity, producing the human subject and all its institutions such as law, politics, and the historical record. The figure and concept, the material formation of thought, are inextricably connected with power, institutionalization, and language. Truths are not ontologically natural, nor are they Platonic universalist ideals (*eidos*); as discussed in chapter 2 in connection with Vico, they are created in history by humans through the practice of language, which produces concepts of the legal person/juridical subject, human rights, and the status of truth. These concepts connect to institutions that bestow and guarantee truths, what Foucault has called "regimes of truth," and they affect which speaking subjects are considered legitimate in testimony and which are cast under a cloud of suspicion. In sum, language's materiality creates the constituent elements of human rights and the possibility for declaring rights: "[A]s a product of ongoing institutionalization, language enforces, cajoles, and convinces, but its more insidious power lurks in its concepts, in the very matter of thought. Conceptually, this power is an antecedent to judgment, which acts in the name of power even as judges can do little more than assert their impartiality" (Cochran, *Twilight of the Literary*, 245). Power shapes the images of thought through language and affects the work of judgment, determining who or what is recognized as a speaking entity, as human in the Aristotelian tradition. As the vehicle for exchanging and transferring concepts, language therefore creates natural rights themselves, which exist through their declaration and figuration, as well as through their connection to a regime of power and their institutionalization by more and more people claiming and recognizing them.

Joseph Slaughter's incomparable *Human Rights, Inc.* further analyzes the role of figuration for institutionalizing legal representations via the creation of sovereign subjects and character in legal designations. The person is a legal category that emerges from two representational traditions, the Roman theatrical tradition of the person who wore the mask, and the juridical tradition that created an agent who could be seen by and represented in the law. Slaughter observes that as a result, "'personality' is a technical term that means the quality of being equal before the law—to put it tautologically, the quality of being a person."[7] Alexander von Humboldt's and Johann Goethe's projects of producing character (*bildung*) or good breeding normalized human reason and affect within the national frame, hence the rise of the *bildungsroman*, the novel of character formation, to aid in the production of citizen-subjects so essential to the emergent German state. For Slaughter, the legacy of Enlightenment thought in both human rights and in the *bildungsroman* describes the paradoxical logic of incorporating individuals within simultaneously universalist and particularist horizons, and the logic of the self-owning or sovereign subject as legal person. The individual emerges or becomes through standardization of figurations recognized by the state within a demarcated territory; consequently, national language plays a central role in calling out and paradoxically normalizing its subjects. After the formation and institutionalization of nation-states in Europe, human rights and the novelistic form of the *bildungsroman* universalized their purview in colonial contexts, as techniques for civilizing missions. The initial development of the individual human character within the demarcated time and space of Europe can be universalized at the level of universal humanism and colonialism through different national, albeit European, languages. As numerous postcolonial scholars have demonstrated, this technique extended European modernity throughout the globe to call out a human conversant in recognized European languages (at one point English, French, Dutch, Spanish, and German), regardless of other incarnations of the human, and to the detriment of human difference.[8]

In this formation, to be human is to have rights. But to be unable to speak rights language is to be nonhuman—a savage, an animal, a thing, or at best a protohuman in need of paternal guidance through a civilizing mission. As a result, for Slaughter, "Like the ambivalence of contemporary human rights law, this rights-man's burden (to trope on Kipling) emerges from a fissure within the idea of *Bildung* that puts natural law's logic of being in tension with the positivistic logic of becoming: an immanent, tautological universal*ism* in tension with an imminent, teleological univer-

sal*ization*" (*Human Rights, Inc.*, 122). In Slaughter's diagnosis, the radical materiality of positive law based on "human personality as a legal fiction" comes up against the being of the human *qua* species and the futural promise of natural rights to redress gaps in positive law. Slaughter describes natural rights as "pre-social and prehistorical . . . they are, at least theoretically, outside the influence of the time and text of society and civil law" (ibid., 62). In sum, the legal person is simultaneously inextricably linked with the materiality of politics through incorporation in positive law through a national language, and yet paradoxically possesses human rights naturally, from the sheer fact of biological existence. Due to the fluid nature of the figuration adjudicating the limits of the human/nonhuman divide, natural rights must be recognized, *pace* Cochran, by an institution—a state or global nongovernmental organization—that invokes these natural rights in language, in order for the individuals possessing these rights to be protected by positive law. This tension is at the root of the incorporated individual, who must lay claim to universal natural rights through individual expression within a determinedly national language. I discussed these issues in the preceding chapter in connection with the tensions between the positions of universalism, particularism, and scientism with regard to human rights, but my focus here is on the role of figuration for language in the incorporation of beings. These forms of individual expression must be recognizable paradoxically within the universal language of natural law arguments, simultaneously naturalized and fixed on the human, and perpetually changing due to historical contingencies. For my purposes in this chapter, what is imperative is that the individual must declare his or her rights in a national language recognized by global or international institutions, without regard to whether this may alienate the individual nationally and culturally. In spaces of decolonization and postcolonialism, this necessity often entails claiming the language of the former colonial occupier, English or French, as the means to express and energize those human rights.

Natural rights are figurations, and are consequently subject to the shuffling between language, conceptualization, and institutionalization that I've characterized with reference to Cochran and Slaughter. These figurations offer glimpses of freedom before becoming fully institutionalized. Yet language also performs the opposite function in the immanent process of the law: (re)naming and conceptualizing the human and its others—the terrorist, the criminal, the *hostis humani generis* (enemy of humankind). This conceptualizing and naming by language becomes the trigger for claims of crimes against humanity and the necessary work of the ICC. The

contingency and indeterminacy of language and concepts destabilize notions of the human, but, as Slaughter diagnosed with colonial structures and civilizing/humanizing missions, institutionalization normalizes the human in order for it to become universalized as the subject of law. I would hasten to add, after Deleuze and Guattari, that this is a process of subject-production that also desubjectifies.[9] Indeed, governments routinely terrorize or criminalize their minority populations, simultaneously desubjectifying and dehumanizing them in the name of the rule of law because they resist institutionalization within the coded norms. For a specific example in international contexts, the very concept of *terrorism* is a formal state nominalization for any attack on state power by the states' others, except, ironically, by economic actors who must be bailed out. As I have discussed with respect to the economy and market humans, culture and utilitarian humanism, and the transactional nature of subjectivity, governmental processes produce legal subjects in order to police operative concepts of the human for states and markets, with the understanding that the market itself must be protected above all. Those who commit acts of terror are legally described as *hostis humani generis*, hostile to the human status, or "enemies of humankind." This designation was first applied to the pirate, the first legal enemy of humankind for attacking government and commercial enterprises on the high seas, a space uncolonized by sovereign states.[10] The terrorist is by definition, therefore, the out-law, the nonhuman, because he or she flouts states' monopoly on violence and challenges the veneer of certainty, organization, human subjectivity, and, arguably, political intelligibility itself. (A new incarnation of the pirate would be the hacker.) Rule of law becomes its own subject-producing machinery, justifying the destruction of forms of life that defy it because they do not fit into the predetermined matrix of human intelligibility. Consequently, the soft rights or social rights that minority and dispossessed populations routinely demand are often frustrated by the very governmental legal mechanisms designed to protect them. Indeed, the process of dehumanization is a governmental tactic that deploys the law to remove legal protections from sectors of the population, a process I discussed at length in the last chapter, and that Giorgio Agamben and Carl Schmitt have described extensively elsewhere as the exception.

Natural rights may rely on a foundation of the pure fact of being human for legitimacy, yet they have historically been invoked to redress grievances in spaces where law and state power have broken down and political intelligibility and consensus have become unstable. These breakdowns unleash potentials for difference and dissensus, or dispute over 'the given,'

and new possibilities of politicization. According to Jacques Rancière, "The Rights of Man are the rights of those who have not the rights that they have and have the rights that they have not." Rancière's convoluted phrasing points to the way in which the subject of natural rights is in fact "a process of subjectivation" that tests a community's "inscription" of rights through material practices that seek to verify the power and meaning of that inscription.[11] For Rancière the enactment that tests the inscription of rights is a dissensus, a placing of two worlds—the world of those considered qualified for rights and the world of those not considered qualified—within the same world, in order to gesture toward disputes about the rights being claimed as well as toward the process of subjectivation that is claiming them. Indeed, despite potential charges of essentialism, natural rights arguments have enormous strategic advantage, enabling the possible extension of legal protections where they currently do not exist and creating a politics through aesthetic means. They allow today's "terrorists" the capacity to be heard, until they may in fact become incorporated within a future, revised state, as has been the case with the civil rights movement in the United States and the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa.

I have been tracing up to this point the role of language for connecting humans with national figurations not only jurisdictionally, in the national legal worlds of positive law, but also through recognition as beings endowed with natural rights by virtue of God, nature, or biological existence. Language and translation create the figuration *human* and through repetition fortify the concept of the human as the speaking subject of rights. Natural rights claims rely on a naturalized and given concept of humanity, a fixed ontology that stifles historic, linguistic, and temporal change and in effect projects a Platonic timeless universal (*eidos*) or essential idea of biology, although the natural rights claim is voiced within a historically specific national language. This paradox of relying on both the biological givenness of the human and on historical contingency for invoking rights as immanent acts may explain why rights are functionally so elusive and why claims to them have failed despite humanist pleadings. In spite of the flaws in the argument for natural rights, the concept does offer possibilities for thinking new modes of existence and freedom beyond the sovereign and subject forms.

Furthermore, the idea of natural human rights does not acknowledge the ambiguity or indeterminacy of the human as a conceptual and epistemological formation within language and institutions. Critics of anthropocentrism from Friedrich Nietzsche onward—Bruno Latour, object-oriented ontologists, Deleuzian process philosophers, and animals studies

scholars—have challenged the natural givenness of the human species.[12] Rather than seeing this as the moment to celebrate a posthuman future, we must keep in mind that the anthropocentrism of human rights is orchestrated by institutional or state power, which through a circular logic confers rights on those it identifies and recognizes, and denies rights to those it will not or cannot recognize, so that the *human* of *human rights* is highly historical and hardly a fixed ontology. As I discussed in the last chapter, the most powerful states police the human and create legal categorizations such as *internally displaced persons* in order to avoid conferring legal protections. By stipulating who is unrecognized as a legal subject, who is an outlaw or is "hostile to the human status," hegemonic powers can use human rights law, ironically, to fix a "natural" concept of humanity, and decide that certain populations fall outside that concept, that they are criminals or otherwise expendable. These issues have enormous relevance for thinking various dispossessed identities.

Power circumscribes the human by fixing language, denying its temporal indeterminacy, while removing contingent possibilities in the reading and writing of the law. The law becomes as essentialized as the spurious foundation of the biological human as a transhistorical essence.[13] How can we reimagine natural rights away from this localized politicization and ontological fixity, away from their foundational essentialism? By recognizing the indeterminacy of language, concepts, and figurations for unravelling the foundations, values, institutions that underwrite these moments, we can shift from fixed concepts (natural rights) to processes (how and why they emerge). I am invoking translation, therefore, as a tactic for thinking dynamic ontological processes that are not merely formed in language but must connect to institutions, states, and recognized languages in order to exercise power. These intra-actions create ahuman forms for thinking language next to representation, and other forms of agency that do not fit within either humanist or posthumanist categories. Radically historicizing the human as a being that is immanently created through modes of Simondonian individuation may offer an exit visa from normalizing schema and reenergize alternative political possibilities. Indeed, as I have stressed through my interrogation of the market human and its others, utilitarian humanism, and human rights and humanitarianism, the status of neoliberalism's instrumentalized and reified human may be the political question of the twenty-first century. To disparage struggles for human rights because they have not always been successful or adequately sensitive to cultural contexts is not only simplistic and politically naïve but quietist, given the continued institutionalization of rights, not to mention the spread of sys-

tematic genocide and the humanitarian and refugee catastrophes of our era. Concepts and actions on behalf of human rights may be seriously flawed, but they also demonstrate, as Rancière points out, a crack in the seemingly solid edifice of mass injustice. Consequently we need to foreground the contingency of human rights, not just for the usual issues of jurisdiction and recognition of the legal subject, but also for conceptions of the human and figurative aporias for natural rights, which mark catalyzations of existence from which tendencies for justice, human and otherwise, can emerge.

In the next section I extend one of Mark Sanders claims, that "translation . . . may be the paradigm of how the law makes and remakes itself in response to its others," by focusing on the practical problems of translation in the multilingual ICC.[14] I explore first the major roles that English and French play in enacting the *missions civilisatrices* that Slaughter warns about, while blocking potential new forms of politicization and freedom enabled by natural rights claims. I survey the literature on translation and identify some key concerns that frustrate testimony in the very real material contexts of the ICC.

Language and the Mission Civilisatrice*: Lost in Translation*

Linguistic and ethnic difference and translation in multilingual contexts are certainly pressing concerns in the daily life of the Democratic Republic of Congo, where there are two hundred fifteen living languages, two hundred ethnicities, and four official languages recognized by the constitution: Kikono, Lingala, Swahili, and Tshiluba.[15] The DRC's official state language, however, is French, left over from the Belgian colonization by "enlightened" King Leopold II. With no sense of historical irony, the equation of language with nation/ethnicity was the divide-and-conquer mechanism used by the Belgian occupiers for supporting one ethnicity over the other in the region, instantiating ethnic identifications that have had devastating consequences, including the genocides in the DRC and neighboring Rwanda.[16] Given the strife between tribes and ethnicities in the region, French has been adopted in the DRC as a neutral vehicular language. Yet the use of French is also a reminder that states in Africa owe much of their current configuration to their colonial status after the 1878 Treaty of Berlin divided the African continent among the European powers, inaugurating the "scramble for Africa." It should come as no surprise then that the trial of Thomas Lubanga Dyilo at the ICC was in French, but all Court decisions came down in English with translation into French, the Court's official

languages. Nevertheless, each legal decision bore the following notice at the end of the text: "Done in both English and French, the English version being authoritative."[17]

The English and French that are the Court's official languages have become *de jure* the universal language of human rights. The ability to communicate in English and French enables possibilities for justice and law denied those who do not have that ability because of the ways in which language produces an understanding of reality, specifically in the Court. The sheer prevalence of English and French as the languages of human rights establishes cultural and linguistic dominance in gaining access to the law—unwittingly equating human rights with the rights of Englishmen and Frenchmen in ways that even Edmund Burke could not have foreseen. Despite pretensions of universality, the Court is vulnerable to charges of European legal and cultural bias through linguistic bias, as the sole language requirement for most advertised positions for Court trial lawyers is knowledge of English or of French. The naturalization of English and French also suggests the historical, geographical, and cultural specificity of "universal human rights," somehow miraculously liberated from their cultural baggage, their use as civilizing vehicles in the service of the white man's burden throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Persons who speak French and/or English as a first or second language due to an imperial/colonial legacy have greater access to equal protection under the law. Those who do not speak English or French may need to seek protection through a vehicular language borrowed from a former colonial occupier.

Such linguistic dominion has led to the fetishizing of local languages as a way to resist colonial legacies, as Ngũgi wa Thiong'o has argued with respect to African literature. For Ngũgi language is a form of communication and the "bearer of culture and values."[18] As a result, denigrating a specific language ultimately trashes the culture, cultural history, and possibilities for politicization of those who speak that language. Emergent peoples may experience spiritual subjugation due to speaking the language of "masters or colonizers." To counteract that subjugation and reclaim local African cultures, Ngũgi advocates rejecting aesthetic expression in English and French and writing in African languages, creating a literature that will "carry the content of our people's anti-imperialist struggles to liberate their productive forces from foreign control."[19] Regardless of Ngũgi's own human rights work, his linguistic essentialism appears to portray all human rights laws as reflections of neocolonial techniques that must be resisted or rejected. Courtenay Griffiths, lead counsel for former President of Liberia Charles Taylor, who was tried for crimes against

humanity by the Special Court for Sierra Leone, adopted this culturalist position during the trial, remarking with sarcasm, "International criminal justice as currently conceived is about those lesser breeds without the law. It is a civilizing process you see."[20] While such claims may be dismissed as the defensive posturing of a lawyer advocating for his client, cultural and linguistic differences can be used as a firewall to try to avoid the central issues of individual culpability, particularly in multilingual contexts. Linguistic and cultural differences ironically may become vehicles for avoiding the Court's claim of universal jurisdiction.

Viewing "other" languages as somehow magically free from the polluting effects of French and English and their neocolonial heritage and outside their own power relationships in subject production is similarly dangerous and reductive. Reference to cultural or local traditions can be used to legitimate the most heinous forms of oppression and mass killing.[21] Accusations of "white justice" have allowed Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, among others, to deflect responsibility for his role in criminal acts, in the name of respecting cultural difference. Individuals before the Court have deployed cultural, geographical, historical, and linguistic differences to subvert "colonialist" demands concerning human rights emanating from spaces of former English or French colonialism. As I mentioned above, all cases before the ICC at the time of writing are from the continent of Africa, which could appear to immediately confirm the European bias of the Court, a neocolonialist human rights bait-and-switch to change jurisdictions from local criminal proceedings within a specific nation to the universalist position of human rights. Nevertheless, cases before the ICC generally have been initiated by the African countries themselves, which have sought the invention of the ICC because of their own war-torn judiciaries. These examples are thoroughly immersed in the messy daily struggles of different national politics, in contrast to the ICC's transcendent and instrumentalized universal legal position. The collapse of specific historical and linguistic differences within "the human" reifies existence, and in the process nullifies the human differences the human category marks and claims to protect through legal universality.

In the Lubanga case, the ICC was fearful of appearing to be a neocolonial court. This apprehension limited the scope of the charges brought against Lubanga, leading to considerable critique by human rights advocacy groups for such a historic case. In all probability the prosecution needed a narrow focus to increase the likelihood of conviction. A successful conviction could also help ensure continued adequate funding for the ICC by European countries, many of whom are skeptical of this non-national court. Lubanga spoke

excellent French and frequently did not need translations, even though witnesses on both sides often spoke in one or several of the DRC's languages. The material reality of translation became instead one of the defense's main lines of argument to delegitimize all of the prosecution's testimony and claim that the defendant suffered inequality before the law, thereby questioning the legitimacy of the ICC itself. Lubanga was convicted in 2012 of "the crimes of conscripting and enlisting children under the age of 15 and using them to participate actively in hostilities in the context of an internal armed conflict,"[22] but the gap between the everyday workings of the law and what can be proven through testimony, in order to fulfill the needs of universal justice for precedent, seems insurmountable. And yet the stakes are enormous for any individual brought before the ICC who may require translation at two levels: translation of the law and translation of testimony and proceedings from French and English, which creates a formidable burden for the accused.

The law operates very instrumentally through reading and interpretation of statutes and faith in the transparency of communication. Customarily, in the legal context, translation has been thought of as the precise, literal rendering of a linguistic utterance, transferred from one language to another. Translation is assumed to restore the capacity of speech to the speechless. Yet the letter of the law reifies life as an adversarial (prosecutor/defendant) hermeneutic game, in which the judgment of the case chooses one interpretation over the other, declaring the chosen reading to be the true, authorized version. As a result, any departures from the literal, transparent meaning made in the process of translation may lend credence to charges of flaws in the legal process, challenge the legitimacy of institutional power, and ultimately undermine faith in any structured legal, ethical, or moral order premised on equal protection before the law.

Studies in translation, primarily in social sciences disciplines, foreground the gap between comprehension and the intelligibility of the speaking subject and her language, problematizing language as the vehicle of transparent communication. In linguistics, two central theses relevant to language acquisition and translation have been emphasized. The first, based on Noam Chomsky's concept of deep structures of sentences, claims that a universal grammar resides deep within the structure of the brain. The other, the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, asserts linguistic relativity and the cultural basis of speaker's actions, the idea that language influences its speaker's cognition, and consequently his or her actions, decisions, and overall worldview. Both efforts argue for linguistics as a hard science and make the pedestrian claim that language conditions thought and human subjectivity. Yet these theories also show the two prejudices I earlier commented on in connec-

tion with rights: faith in biology to explain the commonality of the human (Chomsky), and emphasis on linguistic and cultural difference (Sapir-Whorf) that can be bridged through linguistic commensurability; languages can be rendered equivalent while acknowledging cultural difference.

Institutionally, since the 1990s the role of cultural mediation in translation has gained greater prominence, with emphasis placed on the function and the role of the translator as intentional subject and producer of meaning. Many of the studies of translation offered in recent decades in fact update George Steiner's *After Babel* (first published in 1975), which goes back to philology and mixes philosophical hermeneutics with linguistics to point the need for a field of translation studies: "In short: *inside or between languages, human communication equals translation.*"[23] Every speech act or act of communication within and between languages is an act of translation; language demands translation in order to be understood, or conversely, "To understand is to decipher. To hear significance is to translate."[24] Every act of reading for Steiner is a form of translation and transformation in the production of interpretations. Steiner defines the relationship between the source text and the target text/reader as impossible to replicate in translation because it requires a fixed understanding by both the translator and the person hearing/reading the text. For Steiner, there is no causal equivalence between translation and interpretation, and therefore language—as Ngũgi also maintains—carries historical meanings and assumptions that cannot always be expressed by the translator.

Building on Steiner, but moving beyond the horizon of understanding called for by Steiner's hermeneutics, Walter Benjamin and deconstructionists such as Jacques Derrida, Paul de Man, and Gayatri Spivak have argued that the translator is as central or important to the translation as is the original text, because the translator's subjectivity transforms due to the persistent deferral of meaning. For Benjamin, translation is not merely a matter of fidelity to the original, but a movement between different registers and meanings, an intertextual coding. Philology, in showing the historicity of words and language, demonstrates how time and context alter meaning with every departure of the utterance or translated act:

> It is plausible that no translation, however good it may be, can have any significance as regards the original. Yet, by virtue of its translatability the original is closely connected with the translation; in fact, this connection is all the closer since it is no longer of importance to the original. We may call this connection a natural one, or, more specifically, a vital connection. Just as the manifestations of life are

> intimately connected with the phenomenon of life without being of importance to it, a translation issues from the original—not so much from its life as from its afterlife. For a translation comes later than the original, and since important works of world literature never find their chosen translators at the time of their origin, their translation marks their stage of continued life.[25]

For Benjamin the translation becomes its own immanent form of life. In Steiner's hermeneutic argument, the addressor of one language is able to find equivalents in the addressee's language, yet such a premise evokes a unitary sense of language and communication as capable of being mastered by expert translators. Benjamin instead critiques any coherent sense of epistemological essentialism by emphasizing that translation is temporally inflected by history, power, and politics; elements of life transform the context, and thus reception of the translation. The productive force of translation multiplies the figurative meanings of utterances, creating inchoate forms of subjectivity with each utterance.

Translation as metaphor and practice may offer a way to reconceive the human and its attendant rights due to the role of language in world making, subject production, and power relations, and marks a privileged method for thinking ahumans. For literary theorist Naoki Sakai, translation is endless substitution. Due to cultural and linguistic differences, not everything can be translated, particularly when considering both phonic and calligraphic modes of communication and writing. For Sakai, "the translator must be internally split and multiple, and devoid of a stable positionality," a "subject in transit."[26] This idea shifts the focus from the primacy of the original to the interconnection of original and translator in a network of communication and, importantly, noncommunication that will change the translated item before the interpretive measure of understanding transpires. The translator as a subject in transit emphasizes what Emily Apter calls "translation zones." Translation puts language and meaning production in an indefinite zone of temporal and immanent existence between individuals and collectives. Apter emphasizes the struggles for linguistic commensurability that occur when marginal languages come up against power relations. Languages tend to resist instrumentalization, including simplistic notions of universal translatability, despite Google Translate's technological faith in that possibility:

> Cast as an act of love, and as an act of disruption, translation becomes a means of repositioning the subject in the world and in history; a means of rendering self-knowledge foreign to itself; a way of denatu-

> ralizing citizens, taking them out of the comfort zone of national space, daily ritual, and pre-given domestic arrangements. . . . Translations' failure demarcates intersubjective limits, even as it highlights that "eureka" spot where consciousness crosses over to a rough zone of equivalency or crystallizes around an idea that belongs to no one language or nation in particular. Translation is a significant medium of subject re-formation and political change.[27]

Apter expands on Benjamin's emphasis on how translation transforms not only language and forms of subjectivity, but techniques of politicization. She identifies the emergence of wars because of language's historical importance for establishing identities, as well as how language reveals the contingent nature of the subject, the polyglossia of most societies within a national frame (useful for thinking immigrant flows), as well an immanent potential for new forms of agency. The subject oscillates between a speaking subject of knowledge who says what s/he means, and disruption at the level of meaning of testimony due to institutions and politics. Like Sakai and Benjamin, Apter sees that language creates new forms of intersubjectivity, or more precisely presubjective forms such as Simondonian transindividuation that dynamically individuate by connecting contingent relations and potentials that become new phases or formations of being. As Apter puts it, textual translatability becomes a primary political concern for thinking national, regional, and global self-representation, and I would add that it questions the epistemological coherence of the human. In short, every act of translation problematizes the phenomenological subject on which testimony is based and functions in a network of dynamic relations of subjectifying and desubjectifying processes that create ahuman agency. This agency moves across or shuffles between one context or milieu and another, disturbing the naturalness of all variables involved. The human is a network of fragmented utterances between beings that only retrospectively are given form, meaning, and conceptualization. This mode of encompassing transindividuations creates a relay of often disparate tendencies that coalesce, sometimes into differential thought or creations of language, or that generate what becomes disciplined and institutionalized as language.

Translation and the function of the translator become even more complex within the context of the specialized language of the law and in the courtroom, where jurisprudence is exercised. In both common law and civil law contexts, the law has unique grammars, phrases, definitions, and procedures, particularly in an adversarial court system that assumes a specific cultural or

legal community, even though the accused and/or the translator are unlikely to be conversant with that community. Of course, the demands of real-time simultaneous translation also complicate the movement between different languages. Given that lawyers are usually not trained to work with translators, the latter are viewed as cumbersome necessities to the case. In the United States, however, the development of the field of forensic linguistics has been central to making the translator's presence vital to meaning production in the courtroom, in line with the thinking of Benjamin and Apter. Before the advent of forensic linguistics, translators were seen as little more than linguistic equivalency machines.[28] Studies by Susan Berg-Seligson, Sandra Hale, and Gerald McMenamin, however, have shown how translators have for example softened the force of leading questions by the attorney, resulting in vexing problems during hostile cross examinations.[29] Debates about courtroom translation have centered on whether literal translation helps minimize interpreter advocacy, in which the interpreter through his translation functions as an unrecognized supporter of the defense or prosecution. Rather than simply conveying what was said, the courtroom translator not only focuses on the immanent specificity of the meaning of words, but also on the discursive and figurative aspects (affective orientation such as facial expressions) of statements and questions—how a judge, witness, or prosecuting attorney made the utterance. The task of the translator thus expands to address the "'paralinguistic' aspects of a speaker's communication, i.e., the emotional content and background of utterances, as expressed through the speaker's body language, linguistic style and nuance, pauses, hedges, self-corrections, hesitations, and displays of emotion," as they transpire in the courtroom.[30]

Consequently the translator must have considerable "cross-cultural awareness," as these affective nonverbal cues habitually help the judge to decide the veracity of the witness.[31] Awareness of the differences in language, habits of nonverbal communication, and cultures means being attuned to the existence of different affective cultural markers of respect, the fact that certain words or concepts may not exist in another languages, and the premise that the very concept of individual subjectivity and legal personhood may not have equivalencies in other legal contexts. Also, the contextual use of slang often requires cultural knowledge to understand the metaphorical and affective registers of terms used. Indeed, the ways in which languages are culturally embedded with a set of rituals that establish meaning and facilitate interpretation indicates how many levels of transformation take place with every act of utterance, even before it erupts into representation to be translated.

Joshua Karton's exhaustive analysis of translation problems at the International Criminal Tribunal and his focus on the Nuremberg trials targets the practical concerns of simultaneous translation, translator fatigue, and how the reworked translations of court testimony in effect become the official record for international tribunals.[32] Karton's study shares many of my concerns, as he critiques lawyers' approaching translation as a technical issue to be surmounted, and focuses on the indeterminacy of translated language due to all the variables (legal, cultural, class, dialect, physical state) and personnel (prosecution, defendant, witnesses and their respective translators) involved. For example, he describes how when cross-examining a witness who requires a translator, both judges and lawyers lose momentum and spontaneity due to the time lag of translation, creating a vexing situation in which both judges and lawyers want to instrumentalize language and translation through the official record and testimony, despite their cultural specificity. They want speed and functional equivalence to smooth over any friction in the translation machinery. Without paralinguistic context or discursive markers other than the translator's selection of words to express the emotional elements of the witness's testimony, how does the court transcript transform the court experience through reduction and instrumentalization, adding another level of translation?

Lubanga's trial was the first before the ICC, and when it commenced, numerous translation challenges emerged, including the difficulty of finding adequate translators from Swahili to French and English, and vast discrepancies between interpretations of witness testimony between the French and English versions. Recognizing African names and places during the translation process proved colossally difficult due to translators' Eurocentric biases. Despite considerable effort, cultural sensitivity to languages has generally been overlooked in the face of the legal protocols and rules that through their institutionalization purportedly guarantee fairness. For example, crucial charges against Lubanga involved his having conscripted children, defined as those under the age of 15, as soldiers; yet translating *children* from Swahili into French/English proved considerably troublesome. The defense highlighted the ambiguity of radio transmissions brought forward as prosecution evidence by claiming that the term *children* in Swahili was a poor match for the legal definition, given that speakers of Swahili might denote as *children* not only those younger than 15, but also followers, or disciples, or in effect anyone younger than the speaker.[33] In the final judgment, the ICC did not agree with this claim. It offered no concrete engagement with the term's indeterminacy or context or meaning. Instead, the Court noted that translation is a technical issue it

needed to be mindful of in future cases. In other words, the issue of efficiency outweighed cultural or linguistic difference, as well as, in the process, the recognition of Lubanga's legal human status.

What I describe as the instrumentalization of life into legal processes is unfortunately the ICC's standard operating procedure. The Court wishes to be efficient. The ICC stipulated before judgment in the Lubanga case that not every document or layer of testimony had to be translated, for the sheer scale of documentation could abridge the defendant's right to a timely trial as outlined by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). Both the ICC and the European Commission on Human Rights have set international legal precedent that the fairness principle is not violated if some documents are left untranslated.[34] The Court also decided in the Lubanga case that if the attorney can understand the translation, it is not necessary that the defendant can. Many human rights bodies and international courts—including the UN Human Rights Committee (HRC), the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), and the ICC—have determined that providing a defendant with an interpreter is an adequate substitute for providing all documents in a language the defendant understands.[35] Interestingly, there is tension between the universal laws of utility and expedience and awareness of the importance of cultural specificity for translation. The rights of Lubanga and others brought before the ICC to expression, testimony, and defense can be abridged in light of the utilitarian needs of formalizing law and precedent.[36] I have been claiming that translation puts into stark relief the indeterminacy of existence and life, whether for the speaking subject within any national language or for the juridical subject, that no amount of legal procedure can eradicate. We must also consider, however, how utility functioned as the ultimate normative criteria for human rights protections, or lack thereof, in the Lubanga case. This long excursus again raises the issue of how the mechanisms of economy determine the limits of the possible. To conclude, I consider how translation, the subject in transit, provides a means to think about subjects in circulation with financial capital.

Conclusion

Natural rights are enfigured by humans and translated into a series of human and property rights: one group of rights concerns claims to territory or property, and the other group is based on the sheer fact of being human, casting aside all the metaphysical questions that subtend such a claim. Fur-

thermore, the human personality seeks and expresses rights within a language that precedes the rights-bearing individual and the institutions of the nation-state. Indeed, humans, though they are theoretically endowed with natural rights through the sheer fact of existence, are not endowed with language, but must learn a national language that allows them to exercise the reason with which they are born. By marking this point, I merely want to emphasize in closing that the person is a legal fiction, created in language, that stages the persistent tension between transindividual relations that get subjectified into individual subjectivity and a larger collective (the nation, the species). This tension is at the heart of the subject seeking human rights or justice for war crimes. The desire for coherent language and fixity of meaning is part of the establishment of a unitary concept of the human. The process of naming, expressing, declaring rights brings them into being, and simultaneously naturalizes and polices a concept of the human who can lay claim to these rights. Nevertheless, to demand rights requires utterance, inscription, and deployment of a vehicle of communication for these rights that exceed the human and any possibility of subjectivity. The process emblematizes the arbitrariness of who, or what forms of life, can be considered humans, worthy of protection, as well as who or what can be expunged without concern.

Techniques of incorporation of the subject or subjectification operate to adjudicate the limits of the human within a specific national language; French and English offer clear advantages in terms of conferral of human status. Humans who cannot express themselves in English or French can be lost in translation.[37] Translation is a form of endless substitution that highlights rhetoricity and the allegorical or metaphorical elements of all language, as well as the contingent nature of the subject. Is cultural awareness enough, once it has been reincorporated into legal procedure to guarantee justice? Is this still too instrumental an approach to language and rights? Rather than seeing the cultural sensitivity of language as a failure of universal instrumentality, the contextual use of language at every moment forces the speaking subject to acknowledge what J. L Austin called the performative function of language, its ability to not only describe but to do something, which demonstrates how language can create actions, new forms of existence, and types of subjectivity. In other words, we have to acknowledge not only that we may not be able to say what we mean, but also that the addressor and addressee have a discontinuous relation before absorption into culture, a point I elaborated earlier with regard to culture's utility for monetization. In the legal context of translation, the addressor and addressee are brought together only by the translator. Again, Naoki

Sakai: "Translation is an instance of *continuity in discontinuity* and a poietic social practice that institutes a relation at the site of incommensurability. This is why the aspect of discontinuity inherent in translation would be completely repressed if we were to determine translation to be a form of communication. And this is what I have referred to as the *oscillation or indeterminacy of personality in translation*."[38] Acts of translation create new forms of being that are presubjective, immanently varying through continuous and discontinuous shuffling, and generating what Simondon called transindividual processes of existence. Ironically, being subjected to translation performs ahuman agency, as transindividual processes are types of agency that, nonetheless, still become and can seek access to protections through language, law, and species.

Unless translation and language are conceived as markers of indeterminacy and substitution in the courtroom, the fixed goals and precise language needed for law and international criminal tribunals like the ICC could be compromised. Human right claims and trials based on humanitarian law can be perpetually deferred and frustrated by the arguments of cultural difference. The nation-state adjudicates the limits of the human subject because individuals can only be recognized as human within a particular national language, which frequently reflects specific cultural or social modes of organization and knowledge. Is there exculpatory evidence that is lost due to a problem in witness testimony? In the process, atrocities in the context of war or human rights abuses may be legitimated as marking cultural difference and subverting the neocolonial apparatus of the West, viewed as mercilessly prosecuting individuals in non-Western countries who upset its sensitivities about universal humanity. Ironically, the legitimacy of the ICC can always be called into question on the grounds of cultural specificity and jurisdiction. What makes this perverse is that attempts to circumvent the ICC could be legitimated by the legacy of European atrocities in Africa and Asia under nineteenth- and twentieth-century colonialism. Justice will again be lost in translation.

At the same time, if adequate translation in the global context is not offered, English and French, as the unofficial vehicles of human rights, can force people who do not speak either of these languages outside the realm of the human, constituting them as pirates, outlaws, figures deemed hostile to humankind because they cannot communicate effectively in these legal-commercial languages. In a moment of critical assessment of the ICC's effectiveness, its ten-year review as it were, the Court acknowledged that translation was a problem for which inadequate resources had been allotted. Indeed, "translation was identified as a 'bottleneck causing delay on a

wide scale' at the ICTY and ICTR as of 1999, suggesting it will be an ongoing challenge for the ICC, which has to contend with translations into many more languages than required at the *ad hoc* tribunals."[39] The Court's functionalist discourse problematically views translation as merely a clumsy tool, causing friction for the "real" work of the law. While I do not want to dismiss efforts at reform as spurious, we must also conceive language differently, along its individuating elements. For Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, any instrumental approach to language (what they call the "order-word") destroys the possibilities for language's indeterminacy and invention of new subjectivities at the moment of every utterance, so important for thinking testimony and translation. Deleuze and Guattari emphasize the fluidity of language: "We witness the incorporeal power of that intense matter, the material power of . . . language. A matter more immediate, more fluid, and more ardent than bodies or words. In continuous variation the relevant distinction is no longer between a form of expression and a form of content but between two inseparable planes in reciprocal presupposition."[40] We saw this above in the material practice of translation, when forensic linguistics advocates for the extralinguistic markers to become as important to the translation, and the case, as its hermeneutic matrix. Language is, for Deleuze, perpetual creation, making a functional approach to language—wherein all languages are "foreign" or "minor" vis-a-vis the national language—impossible:

> That is the same as stammering, making language stammer rather than stammering in speech. To be a foreigner, but in one's own tongue, not only when speaking a language other than one's own. To be bilingual, multilingual, but in one and the same language, without even a dialect or patois. . . . That is when style becomes a language. That is when language becomes intensive, a pure continuum of values and intensities. That is when all of language becomes secret, yet has nothing to hide, as opposed to when one carves out a secret subsystem within language. (ibid., 109)

Language for Deleuze is affective and laden with potentials. As discussed above with reference to Sanders, Benjamin, Derrida, Apter, Sakai, and the forensic linguists, language has been recognized as temporally and immanently inflected by the variables of the moment. It is an individuating process of becoming, as Simondon would say, even when connecting into a "collective enunciation." Deleuze and Guattari, much like Cochran, Sakai, Apter, and the others noted above, foreground the materiality of language in world-making with real-world effects. Therefore they relish

thinking conceptually about how free indirect discourse operates by problematizing and shifting the relations of speaking as a persistent shuffle between first person and third person. This is helpful for thinking translations as transformations of national languages, within and beyond mother tongues and the language of the law. It is also constructive for thinking the subject of translation as a network of transindividuating processes and collective enunciations, created by the interactions of relations with reality.

Translation also marks a mode of being different from the transactional nature of economy and financialization. Translation delineates human difference linguistically within and between differing national languages, and frustrates attempts to render the human into a calculable unit so thoroughly fetishized by the financial market and the efficient delivery of justice by the ICC and other legal institutions. With finance, the subject is rendered into a fungible asset and put in circulation. Finance creates subjects in transit, but as fungible objects and immaterial assets to be leveraged for future advantage. While also moving across, translation not only draws attention to the figural and temporal status of the person in language and law, it also provides a key bridge for jurisdictional issues, as well as for thinking the human as a form of difference beyond the species-limit, gesturing to new political possibilities. Translation, a moving across, a bringing over or carrying across, grounds every utterance as a form of human expression that brings together different often paradoxical linguistic, historical, cultural, economic, jurisprudential, and social forces in an immanent historical context. Translation demonstrates techniques of subjectification and desubjectification in the immanent becoming of expression, and shows that the subject of language may not be but a mere figure in time marking collective enunciations. Translation, rather than being a process in which rights get lost, could be the vehicle for thinking rights as perpetually declared, yet rarely heard because they are seeking a universal expression from above that cannot hear their calling.

In this chapter, I have shown, through the lens of translation, that language and subjectivism are much more contingent, eventful, and immanent than currently conceived by either legal circles or by cultural critics who chastise language's nominalism. Language is a material energetics, enfigured by the translation practices I have outlined here, demonstrating processes of subjectification and desubjectification, and working along what I described in chapter 2, through Deleuze, as haeccities, as "thisnesses," and as Simondon's individuations into becoming. These processes actually produce agency, even when they are denied the human status by particular members of the species, another facet of the ahuman.

In part 3, I extend the work of thinking language ahumanly, as a material process of individuating to enliven the human, through speculative fictions. I elaborate how speculative fictions envision worlds that are alternatives to and critiques of the market and state forces discussed in parts 1 and 2. At the same time, speculative fictions produce figurations of agency that foster new forms of organization and resistance to domineering concepts of the human. Speculative fictions create ahuman agency and practice, what I have been discussing as transindividuating processes of agency that can even lead to thinking political agency differently.

PART III

Speculative Fictions: Political Aesthetics Adrift in Speculative Capital Flows

CHAPTER 6

Speculative Fictions and Other Cartographies of Life

In Gary Shteyngart's *Super Sad True Love Story*, the main character, Lenny Abramov, works in the "creative economy" for the Post-Human Services division of the transnational corporation Staatling Wapachung, selling the transhumanist idea of immortality to High Net Worth Individuals (HNWIs). Shteyngart uses Swiftian satire to stage alternative future presents. His speculative literature thinks through inchoate realities by providing critical social analysis of economies and the potential effects of digital and bioengineering technologies on human existence. In Shteyngart's novelistic present, digital communication displaces speaking (texting is more prevalent than what characters in the novel calls *verballing*), fungible data supplants character and knowledge, and scanning (both quick reading and reducing lived complexity to a series of statistical metrics) has replaced reading and narrative. The book begins with Lenny in Rome seeking HNWIs he can persuade to purchase bioengineered transhuman indefinite life extension services, while "thinking about immortality in a really old place." His failure to find humans willing to buy the one commodity they cannot currently acquire in the free market—immortality—upsets his boss Joshie, who thinks Lenny has spent too much time reading, thinking, and

reflecting amid the historical ruins of Rome. Joshie reprimands him to restore his priorities: "Those thoughts, these books, they *are* the problem. . . . You have to stop thinking and start selling. . . . Remember I was just like you. Acting. The humanities. It's the Fallacy of Merely Existing. FME. There'll be plenty of time to ponder and write and act out later. Right now you've got to *sell to live*."[1]

In Shtyengart's speculative universe, much as in our own, the economy dictates the limits of existence and life. This curtailment is represented through the reduction of language to acronyms (FME, HNWI), the replacement of knowledge by data, and the displacement of alphanumeric communication in favor of images. Shtyengart gives form to techniques that reduce lived complexity to mechanisms of utility and that capture life for economic instrumentalities, what I have been calling economic ontology. In the world of *Super Sad True Love Story*, the body is a material limit to be surmounted through bioengineering that can conquer and transcend death for the select few who can afford to purchase "indefinite life extension." In Shteyngart's depiction of a future present, people are not organized within a social field or concept of a public in terms of the Enlightenment ideals of citizenship, rights, and democracy; instead, people's credit scores determine their mode of value and being in the world (to remind the person and alert others, credit poles that reveal the scores of passersby are located throughout the landscape). The United States has become a neoliberal space of perpetual competition where the only unity and commonality that exists comes through a militaristic police state run by the American Restoration Authority (ARA). The ARA controls its citizens through fear and nativist affect, but is itself controlled by foreign debt, which requires vast outsourcing of governmental functions. Public services and the welfare state have been sacrificed at the altar of austerity, while the military is *de facto* and *de jure* the only remnant of the civic realm. (The ARA is an unsubtle reference to the Department of Homeland Security and Pentagon in the era of the never-ending war on terror.) Furthermore, the United Nations has ceased being a Kantian-inspired institution committed to perpetual peace; it has become a global shopping bazaar. Corporations have consolidated into huge cartels (UnitedContinentalDeltaAmerican, LandO'LakesGMFord), and the main industries offering employment opportunities are the beacons of semiocapitalism, credit and media.

Shtyengart's Lenny Abramov inhabits an economic ontology in which life itself is a measurable, fungible entity, and beings have become their data—both ripe for "transactionality." Lenny finds his performance at work daily ranked by the results of his latest physical (methylation, homo-

cysteine levels, triglycerides) and mood/stress indicators, all gathered by his smartphone, the "äppärät," and broadcast on a board for all to see. The health data also tracks his life expectancy, giving his employer predictive analytics on possible health concerns, so that Lenny can be let go should he prove to be more of a liability due to health care costs than his surplus value as human capital affords. Data sets, furthermore, replace interpersonal communication, as interaction takes place primarily through virtual online communities, represented by GlobalTeens accounts, Shtyengart's fictional amalgamation of Facebook, Tumblr, the Google search engine, and Tinder. People share their selves as information through digital platforms, the Heideggerian *es gibt* of their digital presence. Surrounding the free platform are injunctions to the younger generations because, as Shteyngart satirizes with a Whitney Houston song as Heraclitean fragment, the "children are our future": "GLOBALTEENS SUPERHINT: Switch to images today! Less words = more fun" (*Super Sad*, 27); "Harvard Fashion School studies show excessive typing makes wrists large and unattractive. Be a GlobalTeen forever—switch to images today!" (44). Sharing information with others requires the use of a generally free platform, and its users are datamined and monetized by the corporations that create and support the platforms. In other words, the companies gather data and uncompensated surplus value in exchange for the use of the platform, much as do Google, Facebook, Amazon, and myriad corporations in Silicon Valley. Shteyngart's text highlights how despite their ostensible apoliticism, the gathering of data and information and the use of free platforms become forms of politics and control.

Shteyngart's speculative fiction offers many possibilities for thinking the "ontology of the present," as Michel Foucault put it, particularly in terms of Foucault's devastating critique of neoliberalist thinking, now supplemented by digital technology.[2] In fact, Shteyngart proposes an entirely new mode of economic organization, not through a mode of production, but through what Deleuze and Guattari call apparatuses of expropriation and capture.[3] Mixing humor, modernist irony, and an ability to extrapolate and conceptualize alternative histories and realities through aesthetic world making, he rethinks the present amid its perpetual unfolding. Literary authors akin to Shtyengart fill a political-economic vacuum through the production of speculative fictions that provide alternative figures of existence to speculative capital's present social and biological engineering of futural life. Capital colonizes all symbolic systems, from language to mathematics to data, and enfigures life. However, the enunciation of language can produce an aesthetics of existence that individuates other practices

of existence before their capture by capital. As I discussed at length in chapter 5 on translation, language itself can be prerepresentational and semiotic, providing strategies for thinking the increasingly fluctuating shuffle between actual and virtual realities within semiocapitalism. Drawing on language's eventful indeterminacy as a counter to capital's perpetual circulation, speculative literatures provide multiple figurations for countering the consensual reality of market automation in existence, including in thought. Speculative fictions gesture toward ways of life different from the current operationalities of connected individualism, which resides in the simultaneous time of indefinite choices that are not really choices, because they are already programmed. Such fictions thus put forward alternative agencies that transindividuate, or what I am calling ahuman agencies.

Why Speculative Fictions?

As I demonstrated earlier through a look at high-frequency trading, the stock market writ large, and in my critiques of financial capitalism, the virtual movement of numbers signifying virtual trades creates real material effects for the real economy of goods, services, and bonds. The stock market, machines, and fungible value exemplify what Deleuze and Guattari call *asignifying semiotics* within semiocapitalism. Asignifying semiotics structure and/or create human attention and affect through their interaction, as well as conduct human perception before it is expressed within the field of representation. For Deleuze and Guattari, capitalism captures semiotics and subject production and polices the limit of signification, including language. It also models movements, affects, and tendencies to make them resonate to preformed automated existence. Guattari identifies the need to think asignifying semiotics in addition to linguistic signification in order to theorize how power operates through "machinic enslavement," the modular control of existence. For Deleuze and Guattari, machinic enslavement controls not just what beings think, but also how they move in space, connect, emote, and relate to other bodies in order to automate them: "in machinic enslavement, there is nothing but transformations and exchanges of information, some of which are mechanical, others human" (*A Thousand Plateaus*, 458). For Guattari, machinic enslavement is not a matter of the Chaplinesque human consumed by the machine. Rather, it controls the affective dimensions of existence and life, limiting actions (linguistic) and sensations (sense, orientation, perception) to those already calculated and controlled, so that any deviation is a marker of concern, a point I have outlined with respect to "redundant" humans, the undesirables and refu-

gees, and nonutilitarian humans in light of mass financialization.[4] Language and data coding become, for Deleuze and Guattari, central technologies through which asignifying semiotics modulate and control life.

To resist these formations, Guattari shifts his focus from language per se to enunciation, the immanent event of thought's eruption, to question the naturalness of language: "Language is everywhere, but it does not have any domain of its own. *There is no language in itself*. What specifies human language is precisely that it never refers back to itself, that it always remains open to all the other modes of semiotization. When it is closed again in a national language, a dialect, a patois, a special language or delirium, it is always due to a certain type of political or micropolitical operation. There is nothing less logical, less mathematical than a language. . . . The unity of a language is always inseparable from the constitution of a power formation."[5] For Guattari, language is a restrictive formation of power because it always assumes a human subject, like Aristotle's political animal, who will be entrapped within one or several recognizable national languages, and thereby subject to all the problems I outlined in my chapter on translation. Scholars in the fields of animal studies, disability, postcolonialism, and feminist studies, and ultimately all writers on the dispossessed, address these concerns when confronting the hegemonic power relations immanent to language. The question all ask is, how does one resist a language that simultaneously recognizes, enables, and controls, offering the enticement of freedom while containing every utterance that does not become intelligible within power's linguistic modes of recognition? Language reinstalls the subject and enunciating being into a recognizable field of intelligibility and disregards all aberrant enunciations, those that do not fit into these prescribed modes of recognition, as so much babble.

Rather than focusing on the subject of language, Deleuze and Guattari argue for thinking the existence of language as experimentation when it presents itself in the event of invention through enunciation, what the Greeks called *poesis*. According to Deleuze, Samuel Beckett called for "'drilling holes' in language in order to see or hear 'what was lurking behind,'"[6] and showed how creation within language disorients familiar modes of signification, opening the world to different experiences and sensations through enunciative disorientation. Beckett's late oeuvre provides pointed examples; he removes grammar, discernible and stable subjects, and generates episodic narratives, flows of situations that force the reader to focus on the materiality of the words on the page, as in narrative or non-narrative poems, or to see language "acted" through dramas or film. What Deleuze and Guattari are marking is a movement, I believe,

from the molar organization of language through comprehension, meaning, and signification to language as an immanent flow of enunciations. Or as Deleuze's extraordinary books on cinema show, language operates also as images, instead of solely as words and meaning.

Both Deleuze and Guattari stress how prelinguistic semiotics may also be part of the eruption into expression, what they call "collective assemblages of enunciation," utterances that mark every enunciation as a multiplicity that may not represent, per se, but instead enacts an immanent act or incorporeal transformation.[7] Chapter 5 discussed how collective assemblages of enunciation operate concretely in terms of translation at the ICC. There, experience must be recounted and transformed not only by witnesses through testimony, but also by the translators, judges, attorneys, transcribers, and so forth—all of them are transformed by the nonlinguistic cultural and social factors that affect the testimony. Earlier my focus was on the machinery, the legal, cultural, and linguistic processes and formations of power, that is immanent to language's enunciation in order to limit its range of possibilities. By highlighting these concerns I drew attention to the dynamic forces immanent to the enunciation, as distinct from speech and signification, and how the meaning, context, and reception of the enunciation are irrevocably transformed at the moment of the utterance, given all the elements involved. For example, during the actual trial, the transcript stands in for the lived experience of the utterances, and in the process incorporeally transforms the events of the trial, as does the enunciation *guilty* in the courtroom. They both enact a series of transformative events, the latter conferring nonhuman status on Lubanga and leading to his continued incarceration before sentencing. For another example, Occupy Wall Street was an impromptu swarm of people who, responding to the call of the alternative magazine *Adbusters*, tried to converge on Wall Street and were refused access. They then refused to leave nearby Zucotti Park, a privatized public space, and created an alternative ecosystem betwixt and between the post-9/11 ruins of the World Trade Center and Wall Street, the two great symbols (of the war on terror, of financial speculation) of massive societal problems and misguided priorities—that is, until they were forcibly removed from the park. OWS continues in inchoate forms, not only as a periodic eruption of resistance in various nations to neoliberalism's normalization of everyday life, but in the emergence of social justice groups such as Occupy Sandy, Occupy Student Debt, and Occupy Affordable Housing. OWS created an enunciation that has since mobilized previously inert agents into action, recognizing an aesthetics of existence that does not merely replicate or reform the known world but

enunciates a demand. While OWS has failed to continue as an organization, its enunciation has altered the consensual reality on student debt, economic inequality, and imagining the future. Keeping this in mind, I want to stress also how many collective assemblages of enunciations come from nonhumans, a claim exemplified not only by the Lubanga courtroom that designated the being *hostis humani generis*, or by the cancer-causing lead in the water from my faucet, or by effluvia from autos in the atmosphere, or as I will discuss in the next chapter, by the transgenic virus that in Margaret Atwood's MaddAddam trilogy causes internal bleeding and ultimately death in wiping out most of the human species, or . . .[8]

For Deleuze and Guattari, collective assemblages of enunciation mean that language is not controlled by a subject, an "I," or by signification; they suggest instead the molecular qualities of language that speak through us, and occasion new thinking. Indeed, it is for this reason that they focus on free indirect discourse and the shuffling between first and third person as indicative of how language actually functions. For them, the ontogenetic quality of semiotics, not language per se (they call language *direct discourse*), marks how language creates immanent acts through figurations, an instantaneous reformation of the social order: "Direct discourse is a detached fragment of a mass and is born of the dismemberment of collective assemblage; but the collective assemblage is always like a murmur from which I take my proper name, the constellation of voices, concordant or not, from which I draw my voice. I always depend on a molecular assemblage of enunciation that is not given in my conscious mind, any more than it depends on my apparent social determinations, which combine many heterogeneous regimes of signs" (*A Thousand Plateaus*, 84). The collective assemblage of enunciation is not the silent voice of the state that resides like the fascist in our head, or the work of big data instrumentalizing thought to a series of predetermined metrics, but the immanence of concepts that emerge due to an event of existence that reorganizes the entire field of possibility. My engagements with speculative fictions in this and the following two chapters embody collective assemblages of enunciations to look around existence in potentially differing formations. The authors I engage are enunciating realities that coexist in inchoate form right now, but which remain marginal or latent within the consensual reality of financial and economic instrumentality. They also mark unstable formations of agency that are dramatically altered by the constituent variables of the moment, what I call ahumans. First, let us further map the elements of speculative fictions.

Why Speculative Fictions?

As I discussed in chapter 3, speculative capital reengineers the social contract to follow the economic logic of a derivative, a structured debt. Agency (human and otherwise) exists in relationship to economic calculations, in terms of its usefulness and ability to honor debt. (This structure eviscerates the concept and reality of public welfare, and we have seen how it operates in the legal contexts of human rights and humantiarianism.) Speculative fictions such as Shteyngart's counter by using language to multiply "images of thought," a precept and a method that I gather from Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy of immanence. Figuration, for them, is a force and power to delineate immanent relations of life and the events of emerging experiences (collective assemblages of enunciation). For Deleuze, the project of thinking is the creation of concepts to mark the events of existence, and "a liberation of thought from the images that imprison it,"[9] namely, the classical image of thought. The latter relies on a primordial essential unity or *logos*, a totality whereby fully formed and transferable concepts can be recognized and judged; they offer absolute sense-certainty or truth, and are guided by faith in subjectivity to bestow order or sense upon the world. For Deleuze, this common sense suffocates the possibility of thinking otherwise and limits thinking life's becomings, thus containing its dynamism. Containment is a process we have been discussing throughout this book, with neoliberalist and financial market capture, which polices the possible, particularly concepts of useful and useless life.

Speculative literatures exhibit modes of existence, tendencies, and capacities that may or may not emerge, but which nevertheless proliferate figurative, analogical images that enable us to think processes as they emerge. Indeed, speculative fictions provide figurations, less forms than images, with which to think the dynamic elements of life, existence, and experience in their singularity and becoming, even if there are no adequate concepts for the phenomenon. Literature and language are therefore events of life. Let me elaborate. Deleuze defines life as a process of continuous variation that emerges through connections between previously unrelated molecular entities, such as cells or crystals, or experiences and emergent thoughts. For Deleuze, as for Simondon, life is not a transcendent form imposing itself on matter, but marks singularities that invent matter as a dynamic form of becoming through resonating relations. Human perception is always in the middle of the process, and it reifies dynamic processes into objects and subjects, and thus struggles to think matter's becoming, relying instead on substances, dialectics, morality, and

common sense. Consequently, Deleuze and Guattari strategically multiply figurations and sites of analysis within science, fine arts, literature, and philosophy for diagnosing and thinking modes of life. Indeed, in Deleuze and Guattari's immanent philosophy, "Literature is a health" (*Essays*, 1); writing invents "language within language" that reinvents "*seeing* and *hearing*" (ibid., lv). Deleuze notes, "To write is certainly not to impose a form (of expression) on the matter of lived experience. . . . Writing is a question of becoming, always incomplete, always in the midst of being formed, and goes beyond the matter of any livable or lived experience. It is a process, that is, a passage of Life that traverses both the livable and the lived. Writing is inseparable from becoming" (ibid., 1). Rather than giving form or forming a ground, writing invents "non-preexistent" singular practices of life and Simondonian potentials of existence that do not fall back into structures of identification, imitation, and mimesis. Instead, writing marks the dynamism of time.[10] Speculative fictions, though eventually representational and limited by the vernacular language of invention, ironically embody existence as indefinite, adumbrating its fleeting energetic qualities through the practices of inscription and reading before it is disciplined into recognizable forms that can alter "seeing and hearing."

Drawing from earlier utopian and dystopian literatures, I am reemploying the designation *speculative fictions* to embody these possibilities. Speculative fiction is a loose term, one that encompasses utopian, dystopian, and fantasy literatures that envision alternate pasts, alternate presents, and the future. Works of speculative fiction have been written by such varied authors as Euripides and Shakespeare, Herman Melville, Edward Bellamy, Samuel Butler, Robert Heinlein (who is often credited with creating the term), Thomas Pynchon, Samuel Delany, and Octavia Butler. Yet speculative fiction's capacity to generate figures of thought, once thought of as illusory problems of the "society of the spectacle," false consciousness, or hegemonic nationalist linguistic paradigms to be overcome with truth or alternative narratives, perhaps becomes a mechanism to unleash potentials of existence in time—in other words, the practice of political aesthetics. The notion of speculative fictions I am employing, however, should be liberated from the straitjacket of genre, or limitation to works of science fiction. Any act of thought can be a speculative fiction, regardless of discipline (philosophy, literature, bioengineering, and accounting). My focus on literature stems from its noninstrumental function as a medium for thinking in transit, for enfiguring worlds, that refers back to the Latin root of speculation, *specio*—to examine or look at. As I discuss here and in chapter 7 on Margaret Atwood's *MaddAddams*, attention has been reified as a

site of monetization. Perhaps the act of noninstrumental looking through literature, of undirected attention and solitude, can provide strategies for political acts. Stop streaming and start speculating.

Speculative fictions highlight how figuration not only gives form to life, but is also the vehicle for synthesizing thought at its emergence, and for recognizing agency—the personification of action—as becoming. Throughout modernity, national vernaculars hegemonically institutionalized thought to discipline peoples through the vehicle of print—the inscription of thought to extend beyond the moment of enunciation. Modernist artists and writers challenged the givenness and communicative transparency of language and the plastic arts as a means for capturing experience and reality. Globalizing digital and visual technologies and neoliberal capitalism have usurped the critical function of modernism and of print; they have de-institutionalized institutions such as the press, and altered notions of time, space, the nation-state, and so forth, with image techniques. Flows of images—like an endless stream of Facebook or Instagram feeds—open new possibilities for existence, but also limit the range of human thought through programming and predictive analytics. I have been exploring in this book how "the human" is one manifestation of the figurating animal among many whose modes of figuration embody an aesthetics of existence, even when that aesthetics and that existence are limited. Consequently, the potential of the figurating animal, what I call the ahuman, exists in inchoate forms of eventful agency to delineate events and actions to counter the standardizing modes of understanding.

Speculative literatures perform these events and in the process critique neoliberalist economic ontology. The authors of speculative fictions generate concepts and forms of life through the noninstrumental production of novels, an art form that is incongruent with the immediate gratification of digital technologies and the market's monetization of attention. Indeed, the novel, a feature of modernity still pervasive and yet no longer central to the process of producing agency, character, and knowledge, acts on a different scale of time than the "now" of social media. Its narrative unfolding frustrates immediate gratification, cultivates a form of nonmonetized attention, and can facilitate the critical practice of boredom and the state of solitude, disrupting the 24/7 world's demand for nonstop attention so ably critiqued by Jonathan Crary.[11] Boredom speaks to a generalized discontent with the seemingly infinite choices offered by the market's instantaneous and simultaneous system of compulsory connection and its concomitant protocol of generating data from acts of consumption, yet another level of market capture. In other words, the act of reading a book

creates agencies of solitude that demonstrate other modes of life and figures of thought that struggle against the managed life of capitalism.

Let me further elaborate the critical function of speculative literatures by returning to Shteyngart's novel and its specific encounter with neoliberalism, and then flesh out how his speculative fiction thinks the ahuman. In *Super Sad True Love Story*, Shteyngart's Lenny Abramov represents the quintessential antiquarian humanist out of place in an economic and technology-driven reality, where the market humans (HNWIs) call the shots, and actual beings are secondary to the programmed judgments of algorithms.[12] Lenny struggles with the impermanence of all things, wrought by living in New York City, a palimpsest of capital reformations through real estate development and immigration flows. He fears his human finitude and strives to capture youth through the treatments offered by Staatling-Wapachung, and lessen his existential dread of aging and inevitable death. Lenny's generational displacement through economic and technological functionalism causes him to struggle to understand his immediate environments as they pass too quickly into the good night: "Remember this Lenny; develop a sense of nostalgia for something, or you'll never figure out what's important" (*Super Sad*, 23). As a result, he is always belated, lamenting the loss of language, books, and his own evanescent life. To give some stability to his life of flux, he collects books, which reside in a different spatial-temporal order, as they require private reflection, leisure, and are able to defy the monetization of attention that is the tacit injunction—generate data!—of the digital economy. Lenny is chastised as old and anachronistic by other characters for communing with his books, which carry all the material failures of bodies, and literally, in several scenes, reek of decrepitude and finitude.[13] Books eventually end, leaving the reader a time outside of the book to focus attention on other things, on what the text can mean, or to throw the book across the room. Digital technologies, on the other hand, offer endless streams of goods, services, and information, to limit meaning to calculation. The book is an elsewhere to digital monetizing operationalities, and it historically enabled the creation of the idea of the human. By reading books, Lenny neglects his digital profile through the äppärät, and the requisite demands of compulsory connection to others via the platforms owned and datamined by corporations that monetize his digital presence. The äppärät's perpetual connection also facilitates Lenny's emplacement for tracking, surveillance, predictive analytics, and absorption into the endless streams of data and information, rendering him into a product ripe for possible monetization.

Shtyengart diagnoses how social media become a form of protocological control, in the sense explored by Alexander Galloway, offering "free" services of self-actualization that normalize virtual communication practices while channeling information for monetization along the conduit of those who own the distributed network.[14] Surplus value is extracted in this manner, but via the vehicle of monetizing attention, personality, and leisure time as themselves merely conduits of the plane of perpetual work.[15] Indeed, in one scene, Lenny joins some friends for a drink in the hip new up-and-coming area of New York, St. George Staten Island, popular among media and credit types now that Williamsburg, Bushwick, and Red Hook, Brooklyn have become too expensive. He finds the bar unrecognizable, as it no longer functions as a site of interpersonal socialization. Instead, it is a space where bodies are brought into proximity in order to allow smartphone scanning through a process called "FACing" (Forming a Community). When people FAC, they share data on their "fuckability, personality, anal/oral/vaginal preferences," net worth, shopping preferences, and outstanding debt, as well as their expected life span given their current blood pressure, ACTH levels, and ailments. Moreover, they are ranked in comparison to all the other people within the bar. People no longer physically interact but are produced and interfaced by data that renders them into a series of measurements for consumption. Each being scans the other digital presences in the space for background information, then makes a judgment, without having to communicate with physical beings except through the platforms of this virtual telepathy. Scanning creates an ahuman form of agency albeit a negative one. Algorithms consistently rank all beings in the milieu, and their numerical and digital presences become their existence. Their data set outlines their human finitude and predicts their future economic trajectory, a functionalist outline of their lives. This perpetual assessment and ranking generates feelings of inadequacy and produces directives for improvement among the smartphone users, now guided by the invisible hand of the algorithms' programming. The FACing humans live defensively and reactively as they become their data set, and "community" becomes a competition between digital presences. (Shteyngart may be commenting here on the practice of compulsory Tweets on Twitter or injunctions to maintain digital profiles and information for the data feeds by media organizations and tech companies as a condition of employment.)

Data is substantialist in Shtenygart's speculative text. I have been discussing how neoliberalism and financialism establish the regimes of truth and orders of value and police the very organization of knowledge, what is

known and what is thought. In earlier chapters I have shown how governing is not merely about institutions, but consists in directing activities, forces, shepherding power and agency, and producing knowledge, forms of life, and subjectivities to industrialize, even if not to normalize, existence. Knowledge thereby becomes the sedimentation of relations of power and statements that construct the known world, incorporating disruptive passions and affects into codified schema of attention.[16] Shteyngart helps us update some of these concerns with evanescent and immaterial digital technologies and the fetishization of data and information as existence. In *Super Sad True Love Story* he creates a world wherein financial capitalism exercises governmentality, shepherding power and practices through the techniques of data. In Shteyngart's fiction and in our possible future, the short-term logics of speculative capital rule, having created new practices for managing and governing life along economic instrumentalities, and ranking existence as a way of controlling subjectivities. Politics is based on market-human management structures of perpetual security, competition, and assessment, rather than on ideas of democracy, the commons, or collective history.

Shteyngart predicts a world of 24/7 shopping, labor casualization, and expendable populations (the old and those who do not own real estate, or have jobs in credit and media), reserve armies of humans whose jobs are displaced by technology or outsourced to companies abroad, and a soft form of social control through the production of ready-made data identities and subjectivities. His text performs a world where market humans dominate, and life itself is measured by its utility and transactionality. He stages a scene where credit scores are quite literally the measure of the life worth living. "The Rupture" (an obvious play on the Rapture) occurs when an electromagnetic pulse wipes out all channels of communication except among those who orchestrated it. The Rupture is a "controlled demise for the country, a planned bankruptcy. Liquidate labor, liquidate stocks, liquidate everything but real estate" (*Super Sad*, 256), to turn New York and other U.S. cities into "lifestyle hubs" for High Net Worth Individuals from anyspace whatever.

Shteyngart offers a chilling critique of the use of credit scores as a key to people's character when assessing job applicants in the contemporary U.S. workplace, and imagines how financial practices of bankruptcy could be applied to population control. In the novel, all Low Net Worth Individuals (LNWIs) are systematically killed or relocated based on their credit ratings, their ability to repay debt, in order to create *lebensraum* for HNWIs within New York City. Lenny asks his boss Joshie, who was a major player

in orchestrating the Rupture: "What do you mean, get rid of the riffraff with no Credit?" And Joshie replies, "Relocate them. . . . This town's not for everyone. We have to be competitive. That means doing more with less. Balancing our ledgers" (257). Satirizing the current gentrification of Manhattan, Shteyngart dramatizes neoliberalism's free-market ideology followed to its logical financialist end through this scenario of recreating the city as a wealthy city-state of HNWIs, regardless of whether the majority of the population, those who have failed to adapt in this social Darwinist experiment, must be relocated or exterminated. Shteyngart's Joshie uses the platitudes of austerity and market language (doing more with less) to justify systematic genocide in order to stay competitive in the marketplace and for the great opportunities afforded his conglomerate Staatling Wapachung. The hunting down of LNWIs constitutes an economic-based incarnation of what Hannah Arendt termed an "administrative massacre" in imperial and colonial contexts, here done in the interests of the HNWIs who are called by the market and the demands of its efficiencies to survive the techno-economic end times.[17] In the process, Shteyngart shows why the trends I outlined with regard to market-based rights and systems of measurement determining who lives or dies are so dangerous. Furthermore, Shteyngart's novel shows digital technology becoming the tool for normalizing social inequality and apoliticism, while its connection to everyone is touted, and its ostensible removal of all borders and barriers is construed as the marker of freedom—a Silicon Valley marketing strategy as regime of truth. Freedom becomes privatization and vice versa, and rights, protections, and techniques of the state are merely messy things that get in the way of efficiencies.

This social sorting through neoliberal and financial economic processes governs and controls vast populations while outsourcing the nation-state's services and assets to corporations and equity firms. In *Super Sad True Love Story*, the U.S. government increasingly outsources security to a private company, Staatling Wapachung, which become the predominant security force, as metropolitan police, the U.S. military, the National Guard, the subways, and all the car services have been privatized and are owned by one large transnational corporation. Yet, in all this outsourcing of security (a non-too-subtle reference to private militias used during the war on terror and outsourced colonization in Iraq and Afghanistan), the possibility that the service provider may have a set of priorities different from that of its client, the U.S. government, never enters the equation. Staatling Wapachung is uniquely suited to lead the *coup d'etat* as managed bankruptcy of the U.S. government, aided by the electromagnetic pulse it employs to wipe

out all electronic means of communication. Furthermore, the corporation is able to reorganize the labor force ("liquidate labor") along its own desired instrumentalities (real estate, indefinite life extension for HNWIs, and security), as the jobs that once went with the information or digital economy—if no one can connect, what happens to all the media content providers?—melt into thin air. (Shteyngart provides a dramatic critique of Silicon Valley, which currently does precisely this with new disruptive digital technologies and its capitalism organized around platforms.)

Cut off from their usual sense of being perpetually connected through technology, people experience traumatic shock, such as Naomi Klein has described,[18] that is economic in scope and leads to a PTSD type of situation in which the human sensorium is overwhelmed by the dramatic change, and thereby easily controlled. Lenny recounts:

> My äppärät isn't connecting. I can't connect. . . . I can't connect in any meaningful way to anyone. . . . Four young people committed suicide in our building complexes, and two of them wrote suicide notes about how they couldn't see a future without their äppäräti. One wrote, quite eloquently, about how he "reached out to life," but found there only "walls and thoughts and faces," which weren't enough. He needed to be ranked, to know his place in the world. And that may sound ridiculous, but I can understand him. We are all bored out of our fucking minds. (*Super Sad*, 270)

In this passage subjects formed under the technological regime depicted in *SuperSad True Love Story* fall apart once the technology is disabled by the electromagnetic pulse. Social media creates technical beings, directing a sense of liberation and empowerment for subjects wallowing in information, structuring their world through "connecting" to others, through being calculated and ranked, even while being datamined. While historically, connecting to others relied on language and character to mark the limits of possibility, now the technology polices the border and autonomously judges useful life (through credit scores, for example). With the withdrawal of access to 24/7 shopping and information, Shteyngart's characters struggle to adapt to a different order of time, bodies, attention, and confrontation with boredom, not due to too much choice but too little. Without their technology as stand-in for community and preformed subjectivity, they prefer death to the profound solitude of existence and dealing with actual physical others. Boredom is now a form of death. Without their smartphones, the humans have forgotten how to be, to interact, to connect in physical proximity, to encounter others. They have no functional subjectivity other than the one programmed for them.[19]

Shteyngart's novel comments on how neoliberalism dramatically alters the rationale of economic markets and subjectivity, which rely on the idea, if not the reality, of freedom, actualized not through individual rights but through trade transparency in the market. Neoliberal free-market capitalism's legitimation myth of self-regulation justifies the reorganization of wealth, rights, and possibilities for human existence through genocides of Low Net Worth Individuals. Economic logics supplemented by the protocols, demands, and contingencies of data and the mechanisms of quantum physics create their own self-generating mechanisms to organize life, using subjectivity to control modes of being. *Super Sad True Love Story* shows how the network replaces the human as the centralizing mode for understanding complex emergent processes, to tame it through recognizable fields of intelligibility (profit and security). Shteyngart's speculative world of hyperconnections reconfigures the idea of freedom as access to data. There is no alienation of the subject in Shteyngart's world because the subject's mind, his or her consciousness, has been formed by market forces, and affiliation and connection to technology is reality. The novel also shows powerful statist and nonstatist structures of belief, namely how the logic of austerity becomes a sop for the perpetual outsourcing of governmental functions, to the point where corporations govern. Shteyngart's speculative fiction diagnoses neoliberalism as more than a free-market economic system, as also a culture and producer of subjectivities.

Shteyngart offers speculative models of indefinite reality emerging in the United States, and outlines how historical notions of human agency are captured by the intersections of financial capital and inchoate digital technologies. By tracing these new formations of human existence, he asks the reader to envision ahuman agency, even if negatively, as often unintelligible within our current political modes of Enlightenment agency. By encountering the human as a network of biological, technological, and epistemological (data) transindividuations that through their "intra-actions" produce the stuff of existence, we can think new existences, particularly when entrenched consensual realities begin to fester and explode. In Shteyngart's novel, Joshie and the other HNWIs aspiring to conquer the effects of gravity, aging, and cellular degeneration end the story as disaggregated pools of detritus. They literally disintegrate biologically due to their treatments at "Post-Human Services." Lenny survives and becomes a celebrity, and is recuperated as a commodity in a moment of nostalgia. His story, the one the reader has just completed, comprised of Lenny's diary entries and the email exchanges of his girlfriend Eunice that are the center of this super sad true love story, functions as testimony to a moment in

time and the perseverance of several individuals. Yet it also shows how the marketing of narrative and humanism in the face of extrahuman forces functions to limit the capacity to envision a future different from the present consensual reality, the central concerns of the following two chapters. There is no redemption for any figure, not for Lenny or Eunice or the scores of LNWIs killed in pursuit of the transcendent of austerity and the reformation of New York City into a "lifestyle hub." And yet the story is the thing, like a rock, a mountain, or a road that exists in deep time for potential rediscovery. Speculative fictions create types of ahuman agency and being that produce existence. These creations of existence will be the guiding concerns of the next two chapters, where I follow Simondon to think how biological processes provide a mechanism to think complex relations that exceed human comprehension. The work of bioengineering, and specifically transgenics, embodies how the "moving across" that I have addressed with respect to translation is already happening in the reimagining of the form and matter of the ostensibly essential biological human. Both Margaret Atwood and Kazuo Ishiguro name the ethical problematics of free-market principles in the creation of life, and what happens to the ahumans caught within the web of financial speculation.

CHAPTER 7

Between Words, Numbers, and Things

Transgenics and Other Objects of Life in Margaret Atwood's MaddAddam Trilogy

In her MaddAddam trilogy of *Oryx and Crake* (2003), *The Year of the Flood* (2009), and *MaddAddam: A Novel* (2013), Canadian author Margaret Atwood portrays a postapocalyptic and posthuman future.[1] *Oryx and Crake*, the first book of the trilogy, begins with Jimmy/Snowman surviving an all-too-human-made pandemic that has wiped out the majority of *homo sapiens*, but has left most other forms of life to forage through the ruins, including numerous genetically engineered beings who have escaped the laboratories in which they were once warehoused.

Jimmy lives to tell the story of how a highly contagious hemorrhagic virus liquidates the internal organs of human beings, spreads rapidly, and has wiped out the majority of the species. *Oryx and Crake* concentrates on the potential of the interface of transgenics—the mixing of genetic material from different species—and tissue engineering to overcome limits and perfect human or animal life. In Atwood's fictional world, before the catastrophe, the "singularity" described by Ray Kurzweil and Vernor Vinge has been achieved, as human-machine interfaces increasingly rework human biology and create "superintelligences," organic technologies that are smarter than living humans.[2] Atwood's trilogy problematizes the latent

triumphal humanism of transhumanism, the notion of an eternal and essential human subordinating all facets of the lifeworld to its rational ends in the name of human life extension, a point encountered in my preceding chapter with respect to Shteyngart. She critiques, furthermore, the futurist discourses of Kurzweil's transhumanism as perhaps working too smoothly with speculative capital, itself a futural process based on scenario and risk modeling.

Indeed, in Atwood's trilogy the two greatest powers reorganizing life before the disaster were the embedded forces of free-market financial capitalism and biotechnology; both have already altered human existence and biology to the point that the quaint ideas of humanism, human dignity, and life itself have become tools for value creation, marketing, and monetization. Rather than being an "end it itself," in Kantian language, the human has become a tool or thing in an interface between technology, capital, and synthetic biology and genetic engineering. For Atwood, the technohuman elite, the human masters of technology who plug into speculative capital as market humans, are especially dangerous, not because of some Luddite fear of technology, but rather because they reward the instrumentalization of human existence. Beings who think and act algorithmically, develop synergy with technology, or merely view human life as a problem to be solved, orchestrate the organization of society and its social forms. I have been staging this issue throughout the book as the current problematic of humanism and posthumanism within the orchestration of the limits of life by financial capital and neoliberalism, and the consensus on how we think of life itself as instrumental entity to be formed for human or market (nonhuman) purposes.

The Year of the Flood, Atwood's second text in the trilogy, emphasizes resistances to the instrumentalism of life via a vegetarian, environmentalist-cum-ecoterrorist group called God's Gardeners. They believe that God and/or Nature are the only outside to these profit and growth instrumentalities. Many of the God's Gardeners previously worked in the transhuman industries of biogenetic engineering and biomedicine, but suffered a crisis of faith in science when it became apparent that their intellectual production was owned by the corporations for which they worked. God's Gardeners are not a unified grouping, as some adherents have theological beliefs, while others are pantheistic environmentalists who romantically see redemption through nature. The group's members are united, however, in their desire to flee the trappings of consumer capitalism by looking and hoping for something better in a transcendent force. They embody retreat from the industrialization of everyday life, a return to a Rousseauesque natural human reminiscent of

the Romantics and perhaps of the ever-growing ecology movement.[3] The Gardeners presuppose, however, a once-perfect continuum of life that has been destroyed by human agents, and they practice ways of living that diminish impact on the environment, including envisioning their bodies as future compost piles in the great chain of nourishment (*Flood*, 125).

What connects these seemingly incompatible sociopolitical, economic, and philosophical positions for Atwood, I think, is their unrecognized faith in human ability to correct life's imperfections through scientific rationalism and/or directed will—human, divine, natural, or otherwise. In short, there is an ironic residual Enlightenment humanism amid all the posthuman technological innovation, transhumanist futurist discourse, and nonanthropocentric thinking.[4] In the first instance, bioengineers and bioentrepreneurs "fix" biological (natural) defects in human longevity and/or create new forms of life for (trans)human services made available for consumers. In the other instance, an evangelical group wants to bring God back into the world by rebooting nature, thereby enacting God's will through a "waterless flood"; they look to "a massive die-off of the human race . . . due to overpopulations and wickedness, but the Gardeners exempted themselves: They intended to float above the Waterless Flood" (*Flood*, 47). This vision of divinely inspired (but human-willed) "natural selection" supposedly attacks anthropocentrism, but it does so through a vanguard of "born again" chosen ones who claim to decipher God's message through nature. They represent the latest incarnation of the born-again-through-monopolizing-the-sacred (God, nature) phenomenon in the United States, seen in movements ranging from the nineteenth-century Transcendentalists to various strains of evangelical environmentalists.

Atwood astutely connects fundamentalist thinking with uncritical faith in human knowledge, and marks their convergences through different strands of all-too-human hubris—an ironic twist on Kurzweil's specialized "superintelligences." Her characters believe that they can read and understand the signs of nature to manipulate and perfect them, or save nature by shepherding it away from human intervention. By portraying the human as just another bioengineered product, a mix of biology and technology, Atwood marks the synergy of science, evangelical positivism, utilitarianism, and the pervasive messianic faith in human innovation through market-based "green" solutions. My contention is that Atwood demonstrates through her MaddAddam trilogy how both the technocapitalists and their theological-environmentalist opponents project their own values onto the natural environment, simultaneously anthropomorphizing and managing life as a biopolitical tool. I focus on how she delineates the body as the

material limit of the human that renders the human into an object to be controlled and manipulated due to life's unrepresentability save through anthropocentric categories. I explore, therefore, Atwood's profound critique of humanism, posthumanism, and transhumanism by focusing on the instrumentalization of life in transgenics and critical theological and ecological discourses. I use Atwood to argue that the world exists through the interplay of natural and human agencies, leading to dynamic transformations through either life-creating or life-destroying forces that often cannot be registered by simple categories of moral good and evil, pro- or anti-technology, or secularist or theological worldviews. Yet the objectification of life and thought reaches such an extreme in Atwood's MaddAddam trilogy that the species would rather tolerate its own extinction than acknowledge the limits of human-technological mastery.

Numerous scholars such as Kauschik Sunder Rajan and Nikolas Rose have focused on the instrumentalization of life through the monetization brought about by the bioeconomy.[5] Melinda Cooper focuses on how life itself becomes a form of surplus capital that defies the commodity form.[6] Animal studies/posthumanist scholars such as Cary Wolfe and object-oriented ontologists such as Graham Harman, Levi Bryant, and Ian Bogost have problematized the anthropocentric drive to privilege *homo sapiens*' agency over that of other forms of life, objects, and figurations.[7] To that end, Harman and other proponents of object-oriented ontology (OOO) rightly point out how the limits of human knowledge and the assumption of human superiority take us far away from understanding existence, leaving us with mere anthropocentric, narcissistic reflection. Yet Atwood's analysis shows how bioengineering already practices some of OOO's metaphysical musings by turning the elements of life (human or otherwise) into things or tools to be employed and discarded. Her critique of reification—the rendering into thing of the human, the human's thingification—highlights bioengineering's reconfiguration of human and nonhuman life as a map or field of material units in which the human is not recentered as a unitary agency, but becomes one object or relationship of forces among many. Indeed, I will realistically speculate on whether the speaking objects that the object-oriented ontologists want to liberate from anthropocentrism may actually live among us in the laboratories of the biotechs, ushered in by capital as unrecognized instrumentalities of life.

Consequently, posthumanism and critiques of anthropocentrism have limited political efficacy. To make this argument, I focus on Atwood as a writer of speculative fictions; the possible worlds she creates are projections of the future based on extrapolations from the present.[8] All of the

transgenic and genetic engineering technologies she describes already existed at the time of her writing, and she merely imagines what might happen if the marketing promises of many biotechnology firms were realized in the redesigning of human and animal life.[9] Genetic and biotechnology firms play with life by mixing nucleotides, DNA, and cells from different species, and advances in the use of stem cells and cloning create new gene-spliced transgenics. Humans have the ability to create transgenic forms of life—assemblages of species, compromising the biological limits of the species, and challenging the anthropocentric image of the human as distinct and unique. The instrumentalization of life encompasses the concepts of humanity we inhabit and deploy, and many market capitalist processes already exist to "thingify" the human. Atwood demonstrates the importance of critiques of anthropocentrism and speciesism; however, she also shows that they lack a concept of power that is not anthropocentric. Critiques of anthropocentrism ignore how capital, through the biotechs, has already taken the piss out of the human and is creating a world that operates and creates existences outside of human conceptualization. The human is an abstraction that has not been mastered, yet Atwood speculates on how the desire to regulate, manage, or control the indeterminacy of the human leads to a zero-sum game for imagining life as either perfected or exterminated. The concept of nonhistorical, fixed essences is challenged by what molecular biologists call *morphogenesis* and Gilbert Simondon calls *ontogenesis*; and I will contend that recent advances in tissue engineering, stem cell research, and biotechnology delineate life as a nonanthropocentric *process*. Thinking life as individuating process may frustrate the thingification of life that capital needs to reduce life to a network of objects.

Speculative Capital and Speculative Fictions

Oryx and Crake commences with Jimmy/Snowman believing that he is the last human. (Here, perhaps, Atwood pays homage to Mary Shelley's 1826 science fiction novel *The Last Man*, which depicts a horrible plague that wipes out humanity due to the limits of biomedicine.) He sees himself as the last human because his best friend Glenn/Crake helped unleash the virus and set it up that way. Jimmy is not really alone, however, as he provides guidance to a group of posthuman, bioengineered hominids that Glenn produced, who are called the Children of Crake or the Crakers. Glenn primarily goes by his nickname *Crake*, the name of his avatar in a Massive Multiplayer Online Role Playing Game (an MMORPG) called

Extinctathon, an educational internet game that tracks the daily extinction of species due to human activity. Crake's self-identification with extinct species reveals a sense of his own untimeliness within a social order that rapaciously consumes natural resources. Rather than identifying with the human species in this posthuman landscape, Jimmy presents himself to the Crakers as Snowman, a private joke, insofar as they would never have observed snow due to the vast environmental degradation of the world Jimmy inhabits, both pre- and post-disaster.

In Atwood's future world, corporations such as CorpSeCorps have vertically and horizontally integrated an array of industries and control security, biotech and genetic engineering, organ donation, genetically modified foods, and, due to their ability to monopolize violence, ultimately legality and illegality itself. Indeed, CorpSeCorps has a connection to all of the biotech firms, some of which it eventually purchases, so that its private security group becomes part of a larger corporation that owns many of the biotech firms the group is securing; the arrangement is not unlike that of Staatling-Wapachung in Shteyngart's *Super Sad True Love Story*. Moreover, the corporation has had legislation passed whereby it is the only agency authorized to employ firearms; therefore, it controls all modes of security and consequently can police the legal subjectivity of humans. CorpSeCorps represents how the sovereign control of nation-states is being outsourced to corporations, and what Giovanni Arrighi and Immanuel Wallerstein call the historical corporate-state affiliation in the modern capitalist world-system.[10] To protect its worker-assets, CorpSeCorps creates Compounds. The scientists and other privileged workers live in fortified exurban enclaves with their own malls, schools, parks, and homes. The corporation thus secures its intellectual products, including employees, within a militarized space. The employee's world is miniaturized; each compound is self-sufficient, and who can gain access to it is regulated, as if it were a military outpost. CorpSeCorps also outsources security to mafia-like forces that are in fact its own subsidiaries, located out in the pleeblands. The corporation, in true "market human" fashion, uses the law as a tool of its control, but it also bypasses legal regulations when financial expediency beckons. Certain market human forms of life are secured and protected; they thrive, with the world's real and imagined resources at their feet, in the Compounds, while vast swathes of Atwood's fictional pleeblands are populated with "expendable people." She depicts a world like our future present, with corporations and speculative enterprises as the domineering force of social organization.

Atwood's aesthetic project of speculative world-making creates a play on utopia, straddling perfect and hellish worlds that are "no place," what she calls *ustopias*:

> *Ustopia* is a word I made up by combining utopia and dystopia—the imagined perfect society and its opposite—because, in my view, each contains a latent version of the other. . . .
>
> In addition to being, almost always, a mapped location, ustopia is also a state of mind, as is every place in literature of whatever kind. . . . In literature, every landscape is a state of mind, but every state of mind can also be portrayed by a landscape. And so it is with ustopia.[11]

For Atwood, ustopias emphasize the best and worst elements of humans. The MaddAddam trilogy depicts a world devastated by cataclysmic weather/environmental events, the melting of the polar ice caps, and an elite power structure that exercises power through the monopolization and manipulation of forces, including life itself. And yet, she claimed at the time of her writing that her three main ustopic works, *Oryx and Crake*, *The Year of the Flood*, and *The Handmaid's Tale*, offer the possibility of change due to the fleeting situations the characters find themselves in—less due to the formations of human will, or the indomitability of the human spirit, than to contingent actions, willful or not, that lie "within our power." Atwood says, "We should probably not try to make things perfect, especially not ourselves, for that path leads to mass graves. We're stuck with us, imperfect as we are; but we should make the most of us."[12] In sum, she describes the productive power of aesthetic world-making and subject formation in literature as something akin to what Baruch Spinoza called *conatus*, a striving into being of actions and agency that frequently exceed human knowledge and understanding.[13] Consequently, rather than the transhuman dream of transcending the limits of the human by creating a technological hybrid (a *Matrix*-like downloaded consciousness, or some biological cyborg in the style of *Battlestar Galactica*), Atwood describes the human as creative force and material limit embedded in reality that no technological and financial innovation can transcend due the materiality of the body and the limits of human intelligence or mind.

In her ustopic writings, Atwood may be following Virginia Woolf, a writer whom she greatly admired. Woolf warned of how marketing colonizes thought and writing to such an extent that the boundaries between promotion and thought become impossible to discern, an idea explored in the preceding chapter with regard to Shteyngart and digital monetization.[14] Atwood's speculative work proposes alternative histories of the

present to counter that trend. She was writing *Oryx and Crake* when 9/11 occurred and during its ensuing manias against ubiquitous and ineffable terror, and was thinking the consequences of flexible means of security that penetrate all aspects of everyday life, like CorpSeCorps. *The Year of the Flood*, which shows the privatization of governance in its depiction of CorpSeCorps, appeared after the devastation of New Orleans due to Hurricane Katrina. *MaddAddam: A Novel*, which emphasizes the dangers of short-term thinking, appeared in the wake of the BP Deepwater Horizon oil spill, as well as in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy and its crippling effects on the northeastern seaboard. Commenting on *Oryx and Crake*, Atwood said: "As with *The Handmaid's Tale*, it invents nothing we haven't already invented or started to invent. Every novel begins with a *what if* and then sets forth its axioms. The *what if* of *Oryx and Crake* is simply, *What if we continue down the road we're already on? How slippery is the slope? What are our saving graces? Who's got the will to stop us?*"[15] Atwood has modeled several possible worlds, and fears that speculative capitalism's short-term profit-seeking exacerbates environmental degradation. An earth fully devastated will be unable to regenerate itself either by advances in human knowledge, technological invention, or the dynamic forces within life itself. *The Year of the Flood* introduces God's Gardeners, who form partnerships with bioengineers to destroy humanity in order to save it. (Dorothy, we're not in Vietnam anymore.) J. Brooks Brouson reads Atwood as critiquing consumer societies in which all resources, human and otherwise, become means for feeding "corporate cannibalism."[16] In the world of her novels, even corpses have value for the organs that can be harvested, a fate that frequently befalls corporate dissidents, imprisoned and then disappeared by CorpSeCorps. Atwood depicts the repurposing of the husk of the body for Green garboils—processed human body parts that could be fed into cars as biofuel to run vehicles—exemplifying how scientific progress and environmentalism come together to exercise horrifying power; or the body might be disposed of as an ingredient of SecretBurgers (a trope for industrialized fast food; the Secret is Humans!) with "few supply-side costs" (*Flood*, 34).

In addition to the aforementioned animal studies scholars and object-oriented ontologists, theologians extend one of the more concerted critiques of anthropocentrism. Humans, they say, have abandoned God's plan that the human would be God's reflection, and instead have put themselves in the center of the universe. Consequently, religious voices have provided the most extensive critical discourses about genetic and stem cell engineering, led by theological humanist Leon Kass.[17] Brouson identifies as a

common theme of Atwood's work the commodification of women and their subjugation by men and argues that her focus on religion provides a hope for transformation, and the only ethical outside to this encompassing system. However, unlike Brouson, I think religion is part of her critique rather than a space outside.

As an alternative to the theological, Atwood employs the aesthetic as a critical technique of world-making and materiality to challenge techno-capitalism. The deployment of creative destruction by capitalist or state forces to maintain a specific world image has guided Atwood's thinking in her ustopic novels, whether in her envisioning the patriarchal, evangelical theocracy of *The Handmaid's Tale*, or in her depicting the drive to perfect human life, whereby "naturally born" humans are seen as a virus that can be extirpated to save the planet in the MaddAddam books. The aesthetic project of world-making upsets the policing function of what Rancière calls the "distribution of the sensible"; it is a way to communicate differently, to think value, and to challenge social organization amid complex processes of life that often can be modeled only through analogical figurations.[18] Atwood's speculative ustopic fictions thus maintain an ethical aesthetic function by staging several possible worlds without theological moralizing, and provide figurations of possible realities that could be changed through human-technological action.

Speculative fictions like Atwood's gesture toward an unrealized future and envisioned scenarios; in this regard, her strategy is similar to that of speculative capital, the very force whose fictions have become our realities. As I discussed at length in the first three chapters of this book, speculative instruments for hedging, derivatives, and securities unmoor value from actual material commodities, becoming ends in themselves as virtual models of risk and reward. Political philosopher Melinda Cooper comments on the "'evental' and atmospheric quality of power" by analyzing the relationship between financial markets and environmental crisis to mark a shift in capital from an "exchange of equivalents" to the "universal transmutability of fluctuation."[19] Cooper describes how "the futures methodology of scenario planning" shares much with "possible world theories" and Leibniz's "compossible worlds." All are "interested in the ways things could be, or could have been, modes of being that are rendered by the grammatical constructions of the conditional or the subjunctive."[20] Future returns may not produce anything other than the idea of the promise, for the promise need not ever be honored. Cooper shows how, as a result, derivatives are used as forms of risk management that can even monetize and speculate on the natural environment, fluctuating weather patterns, and potential disas-

ters.[21] Catastrophe bonds and environmental derivatives based on measuring physical flows and temperature relations and their effects on agriculture (or, trying to, probabilistically) are vehicles for speculative capital. The economic system is no longer based on the stability of neoclassical economics, but rather anticipates and expects crisis, and uses derivatives as a way to measure the immeasurable. Control, risk management, and even the fundamental mode for fixing meaning into intelligibility, truth, function as probabilistic systems. They indicate the limits of human knowledge and agency, specifically as humans try to restore intelligible order, to manage the uncontrollable through risk models.[22]

The aesthetic and figurative processes that we see at work in speculative fictions operate as well in speculative capital. Both are inventions of the human mind that create and model realities and worlds, predict catastrophes, and create value from them, albeit for different ends. Speculative capital produces value that can eventually be monetized even if there is no material commodity, or it is not possible to trace the source of the derivative to a corresponding thing or process in reality. The derivatives' immanent modeling becomes an enfigured reality, one that displaces the social contract into a logic of debt, and overlooks long-term consequences in light of short-term gains. On the other hand, speculative fictions model possible worlds not for monetary value, but for the sake of scenario imagining that may have more predictive value than the short-term leveraging we see in financial capital. By means of her ustopian works, Atwood hopes to model the risks of failing to think unintended effects, and thereby demonstrates not only the creative but also the critical possibility of speculation. Both speculative fictions and speculative capital project material formations through connections of often disparate and contradictory variables. Yet the derivatives are algorithms considered more real or more truthful than the fictional musings of novelists, due to the economic organization of social power.

Atwood's speculative fictions rely on temporal play. *Oryx and Crake*, *The Year of the Flood*, and *MaddAddam: A Novel* move between a time before and a time after catastrophe, so that as the story unfolds we are already belated and can follow the mass destruction, the unthought and unintended consequences that lie on the limits of human conception and reason. The skill in speculative modeling in Atwood's books comes through her narration, her ways of showing the same set of events from multiple perspectives. The characters have intersected in their past and come together again only in the last scene of *The Year of the Flood*, and later throughout *MaddAddam*. Her texts are critical speculative treatises on the failures of risk management,

when what is at stake in the speculative game is life itself. To elaborate this point, I diagnose below Atwood's two most powerful figurative models for critiquing how materialist processes are portrayed by those in power as unintelligible chaos that exceeds human conceptualization. The first section below focuses on the instrumentalization of life through the production of new transgenics that show how (biological) life becomes a game or task to be perfected with human intelligence, itself marked by privileging numeric values and measures over the indeterminacy of words and language. The second section centers on the nonanthropocentric processes that belatedly come to human recognition through the instrumentalization of nature and God in theo-ecological discourses.

Life as a Business Plan: Games as an Elegant Delivery System

The MaddAddam trilogy portrays a world where transgenics fill gaps in human existence by offering new possibilities for monetizing existence. Jimmy's father is on the front lines of "genography," headhunted by various corporations because he can grow human neocortex tissue in pigs to create "pigoons." He manufactures pigs with human DNA, creating transgenic chimeras that problematize species and bodily integrity. Jimmy's mother is a molecular biologist who becomes increasingly disenchanted by the biotech firms' immoral "interfering with the building blocks of life" (*Oryx*, 57). She evokes the sacred as the limit-event of life, and calls to mind the debates over cloning, including President Clinton's National Bioethics Advisory Commission that emerged in the wake of the creation of Dolly the cloned sheep in 1996. For Jimmy's mother, the sacredness of human life—the divine read through the human—should provide a barrier to technological intervention; such intervention is morally repugnant to her.[23] However, for Jimmy's dad, "It's just proteins. . . . There's nothing sacred about cells and tissues" (ibid.). He demonstrates the viewpoint that drives all the scientists in the text, including Crake, who view these fragments as units, and therefore unworthy of being considered as viable, autonomous life forms. The cells are therefore things or instruments to be manipulated by human will, by synthetic biologists, rather than life forms in their own right.[24] Yet the perspective of Jimmy's father is merely an aspect of a more generalized view of life itself as a game or puzzle to be mastered by human will.

Much of Crake's and Jimmy's projection of reality and world-making comes from the powerful financial companies that control their everyday lives; their sense of individual freedom derives only from the MMORPGs they play. The MMORPGs, however, normalize a sense that life is a series

of tasks or games to perform and master. Jimmy and Crake grow up in the privileged surroundings of the Compound owned by the biotech Helth-Wyzer. They spend most of their young lives (between ages 13 and 18) together, but inhabit virtual elsewheres through the infinite promise of digital technologies. With their parents off at work, the games and media construct their ethical selves, making the distinction between actual and virtual games impossible to discern. They commit their free time outside of school to MMORPGs such as Kwiktime Osama, and seemingly educational ones such as Extinctathon, a game rewarding players who know and can keep track of the daily extinction of species, Blood and Roses, and Barbarian Stomp, in which players can take pleasure in the annihilation of other human beings through games, a phenomenon Walter Benjamin diagnosed and warned against in another context in the 1930s.[25]

Games like the MMORPGs are designed to allow for seemingly autonomous movement, yet the technological protocols and algorithms of the game have already been programmed, even if they have an interactive function in real time. Indeed, protocols, sets of codes and algorithms, rules, and regulations, create mechanisms of decentralized control that no longer follow a hierarchical or centralized type of command.[26] In other words, as we have discussed in several chapters, control in the digital realm operates through nonlinear flows and flexible management of access or nonaccess, represented concretely by algorithms. Bernard Stiegler diagnoses these same flexible systems of algorithmic control through what he calls an "organology": the industrialization of systems of organization from organs, perception, and affect that standardize or conduct human activity within normative parameters to reproduce society faithfully at minimal cost, a description in consonance with my earlier discussion of Gramsci, Foucault, and Deleuze and Guattari.[27] Stiegler's description applies to a society regularized to multitask in a generalized flux of images, assignments, and business-oriented efficiencies. The proliferation of new forms of multitasking allows for greater flexibility, but for Stiegler also threatens the loss of the ability to pay attention or care about events and other people in the world. Digital technologies offer access to seemingly limitless knowledge, places, and images, yet actually industrialize memory, forms of attention, judgment, and care for the user, who is discouraged from thinking outside the habitual protocols of perception. (As discussed, Shteyngart's speculative work portrays a possible effect of this process, when people can no longer connect through their smartphones and prefer death to encounters with unmediated reality.) The nonlinear digital technologies demonstrate flexible control, instrumentalizing

attention to focus on short-term goals, as in a game to be mastered, to the detriment of complex thought. As societies become more complex, they also standardize attention to tame the chaos of possible scenarios within a limited and managed field of experience. In the process, life becomes reconfigured as an algorithm, a complex calculation that generates automated reasoning.

Games represent how attention is instrumentalized by creating risk-modeling scenarios, and it is these scenarios that control life algorithmically, to make it useful for speculative capital. Atwood's speculative fiction critiques these formations by portraying Jimmy and Crake as intelligent and socialized, but clearly these teenagers also have short attentions spans. In a twist on the diagnosis offered by Stiegler, the games and digital media are not merely a sign for loss of critical attention to the surrounding world or of flight from reality, but offer moments when Jimmy and Crake can exercise some control over their digital reality in an otherwise hyperregulated society. They seek knowledge in what is taboo, endlessly surfing through porn and executions, or both, until the two types of content become indistinguishable (*Oryx*, 86). The unimaginable sexual and violent acts the boys watch, ranging from televised executions on "hedsoff.com" and "brainfrizz" to the Noodie News (news given by naked people), through kiddie porn, animal snuff websites, and Painball—a kill-or-be-killed game much like the Roman gladiator contests of old, in which criminals have a choice of being shot or participating in a survival-of-the-fittest battle in the Painball arena—soon lose their ability to shock within the stream of programming. Increasingly normalized within the United States, CorpSeCorps has calculated through a cost-benefit analysis that televised executions could be effective social deterrents that would also serve an entertainment function. When the executions on TV prove popular and spark competition for viewers, they become more theatrical and gruesome to keep attracting audience share, a commentary on the so-called torture-porn genre of the *Saw* and *Hostel* franchises, as well as the videos of decapitations by anti-American groups after the U.S. invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq. Jimmy and Crake frequently ponder whether any of the digital entertainments they watch are real or virtual, due to their heightened theatricality. These entertainments do have actual effects, however, projecting the world as a speculative image that, according to the differing interactive algorithms, offers multiple pathways to success, and they create the illusion that human agents can exercise control or resistance: they can change the website, switch games, or tune the channels of communication in or out. The programming always already comes from elsewhere, and agency is

exercised by focusing attention or not. But attention or affective value is another means to monetize existence, and resistance to the protocol acts as another variable for reformulation within the algorithm.

The aforementioned Blood and Roses is a trading game like Monopoly, but in it human atrocities (massacres, genocides on a large scale) are bartered for "monuments to the soul's magnificence" (*Oryx*, 78):

> The player who managed to retain the most human achievements by Time's Up was the winner. . . . The exchange rates—one Mona Lisa equaled Bergen-Belsen, one Armenian genocide equaled the Ninth Symphony plus three Great Pyramids—were suggested, but there was room for haggling. To do this you needed to know the number—the total number of corpses for the atrocities, the latest open market price for the artworks; or, if the artworks had been stolen, the amount paid out by the insurance policy. (ibid., 79)

Life becomes another fungible element, made all the more so because the trading encourages knowledge acquisition, entrepreneurialism, and thought as risk management by forcing the player to make difficult choices within speculative world modeling. The games are marketed as having an educational or altruistic element. Here Atwood appears to be commenting on the growing contemporary trend of "gamification." Indeed, as game theorist and object-oriented ontologist Ian Bogost describes, the creative and inventive aspects of video games have been coopted by gamification, or "exploitationware," to turn any aspect of games into a business practice, into ways to make tasks fun.[28] This should be unsurprising to Bogost, as gamification and games follow the same risk-reward dyad, and also adhere to algorithmic modeling, as Alexander Galloway has diagnosed in *Gaming: Essays on Algorithmic Culture*.[29] Labor as a game of risk and reward reasserts the logic of derivatives, financial capital, and scenario modeling encountered in my analyses of entrepreneurial life and market humans, OOO and speculative capital, and with respect to Melinda Cooper's work on scenario planning and derivatives in *Surplus Life*. By managing risk effectively, you achieve great rewards, show an entrepreneurial spirit, à la the market human, and master yourself by mastering the game through the repetition of tasks until you succeed. You honor the injunction "know thyself" through success at the game, through adherence to its prescribed protocols and algorithms.

The normalization of life itself as a game during Crake and Jimmy's adolescence shapes how these two main characters see the world, interact with others, and understand themselves as winners or losers. Crake connects to the games better than to other humans because, with repetition,

he can master games. He is groomed for success in his personal life by becoming the Grandmaster of Extinctathon, while enacting the algorithms and protocols of societal acceptance by going to Watson-Crick University and developing a superior career as a valued employee of the biotech RejoovenEsence. Crake masters the current modes of societal value, the moment when his actual and virtual worlds intersect, and therefore never suffers from all-too-human self-doubt. As he can master the games, he can master life, and this kind of mastery is reinforced by the society he inhabits, which uses it to determine who will be its winners.

Atwood reinforces this point about winners and losers of a societal game, through her depiction of the educational process as a game in the MaddAddam texts. In them no child can be left behind, but the race to the top has already been mapped out along specific pathways of success. To be a winner of the game, the child must be a "numbers person," because this society sees the mathematical modeling of reality as existence *tout court* (*Oryx*, 25). Numbers and algorithms have taken on the status of reality through spreadsheets, budgets, cost-benefit analyses, opinion polls, game points, sports statistics, cultures of assessment, and the ability to model and monetize abstract elements of human existence, such as the learning processes and instrumentalization of (useful) knowledge. What cannot be rendered into a numerical value has no business existing.

Atwood comments directly on the instrumentalization of character and what used to be called souls by staging C. P. Snow's two cultures debate, about the sciences vs. the humanities. The sciences are the mode of value connected to the social reproduction of society. The arts/humanities are left trying to figure out their purpose, in a world where affective value (passion, emotions, sensations) is only useful for monetization. Jimmy, although the offspring of a genographer and a microbiologist, is a words person, and he attends the Martha Graham Academy, an arts and humanities school with specialties in the Performing Arts. By the time he attends, the campus is a functioning ruin; it was set up by well-intentioned rich people at the end of the twentieth century to cultivate a type of human production that no longer has value: "So a lot of what went on at Martha Graham was like studying Latin, or book-binding: pleasant to contemplate in its way, but no longer central to anything" (*Oryx*, 187). Indeed, the creative arts prove hard to instrumentalize through continuous assessment and results-oriented development, and are viewed thereby as lacking value in the development of fungible skills. To address this, Martha Graham has traded its arts-for-art's-sake slogan, *Ars Longa*, *Vita Breva*, for "Our Students Graduate with Employable Skills" (ibid., 188). Students specialize in

arts that could lead to advertising and design jobs through such majors as Problematics and Webgame Dynamics.

Atwood speculates on the dismantling of the humanities and the university as historic sites of nonutilitarian knowledge production by creating a society wherein the business practices of financial capital and their tools of efficiency (algorithms and functional skills) define knowledge. In Atwood's future, gender, class, and the distinction between words people and numbers people are the primary mechanisms for discerning the life worth living, rather than race and ethnicity.[30] For Jimmy, words ironically provide stability in a world of dramatic change, and thus he lives like an antiquarian (like Abramov in *Super Sad True Love Story*), trying to hold on to disused words as an art form and as a way to give life meaning.[31] While at Martha Graham before the catastrophe, Jimmy develops a passion for going into libraries to look at physical books before they are digitized and destroyed, and he remembers complicated words that are being jettisoned from the lexicon in the name of linguistic streamlining: "Part of what impelled him was stubbornness; resentment, even. The system had filed him among the rejects, and what he was studying was considered—at the decision-making levels, the levels of real power—an archaic waste of time" (*Oryx*, 195). Jimmy's utilitarian failures cause him to escape into a mythical past and monumentalize words and books in which words have contingent and multiple meanings. He embodies the humanist position as seen from the perspective of the speculative bioengineered posthuman. Rather than celebrating Jimmy as someone who has found an antidote to instrumentalization, however, Atwood depicts him as paralyzed with self-pity and resentment, seeking solace in nostalgia or fantasy—a none-too-subtle swipe, perhaps, at academics generally. Atwood evokes through Jimmy, nonetheless, an Orwellian theme common to these texts, a theme seen as well in *The Handmaid's Tale*: The loss of language results in the loss of concepts, memory, history, and ultimately experience itself, limiting the range of thought. Oscar Wilde proclaimed that "all art is quite useless," tacitly suggesting that art enables new thought because it does not have an immediate use for monetization;[32] but in Jimmy's world, the arts must function algorithmically. Managing contingency, multiple meanings, and linguistic differences become the functions of the arts, ways they can be monetized.

Unlike words, numbers provide a symbolic system for modelling complex concepts and processes, giving human agents a sense of stability; they fulfill the human desire for essential truths of existence in the face of uncertainty. They allow, furthermore, for the management of contingency,

so essential for speculative capital, a point I brought up in chapter 3 in light of Meillassoux and OOO. Complex risk management scenarios can only be determined through mathematical and algorithmic models; such scenarios have been taken to be existence itself. As I argued in my earlier chapter on translation, languages are marked by difference, whether national languages, regional dialects, or types of specialized knowledge, thereby frustrating the will to instrumentalize, despite repeated arguments for universal communicability.[33] Numbers offer the sense if not the reality of universal translatability, because they function as images that can cut transversally through linguistic differences. In Atwood's speculative future, the arts have already lost the game, because words and language draw attention to indeterminacy and failure to master and control human modes of communication that embed them in the material world.

Atwood portrays the numbers peoples as task-driven specialists who direct all their attention to theoretical problems without thinking of the consequences of their actions or speculating on the contingent effects that may emerge from the specific task at hand.[34] They think and act algorithmically, and while they can recognize the interconnections of differing knowledges, they dispense with all nonmathematical forms of existence. Crake succeeds famously at the HelthWyzer high school compound because his intelligence is fully in line with this order of knowledge. He is groomed for success in being admitted to Watson-Crick University. There, he studies and makes transgenics for biotech corporations through synergies between corporations and the university. Students at Watson-Crick receive half the royalties for their inventions—"it was a fierce incentive" (*Oryx*, 203). Many of the students at the university are probably on the autism spectrum: "Watson-Crick was known to the students there as Asperger's U. because of the high percentage of brilliant weirdoes that strolled and hopped and lurched through its corridors. Demi-autistic, genetically speaking; single-track tunnel-vision minds, a marked degree of social ineptitude" (ibid., 193). Rather than being shunned, they are rewarded for their specialized and obsessional behavior due to the results they achieve for the corporations, a none-too-subtle critique of math and science whizzes being the entrepreneurial financial heroes of biotech and Silicon Valley firms. Instrumentalizing life, commoditizing it, follows an algorithmic calculation that does not necessarily connect to other algorithms focused on the consequences of creating new species. Atwood shows how perfectly the researchers at Watson-Crick and the biotechs are adapted for the neoliberal game run by the corporations.

Rather than seeing this as a typical lament on the death of literature, literacy, or the humanities, I think Atwood is highlighting differing symbolic systems that humans use to paper over the indeterminacy of meaning; scientific and observational empiricism is one such system, devoted to what Nietzsche called the creation of values and truth. She recognizes that matter, rather than existing as inert essences, is a dynamic network of fluctuating relations that achieve mere moments or events of stability. Language and numbers allow human agents a sense of illusory control through the anthropocentric ordering of probabilistic entities.[35] But language cannot hide the indeterminacy, or the fact that there may not be a structural or functional equivalent between different languages, as my chapter on translation diagnosed. The ability to render futural realities into games, systems, or algorithms seems to manage chaotic and complex processes through symbolic forms. Numbers are a symbolic system, now so commonly accepted that the determinacy that was enacted in establishing them as the keys to the universe has been forgotten. Numbers have been granted the status of truth; they are the basis of the modes of valuation that construct the social order. For most of the inhabitants of the world depicted in *Oryx and Crake*, statistical and algorithmic realities have been naturalized as reality itself, much as for Shteyngart's datamined individuals who FAC. I think Atwood is commenting on all the historic numeric models for guiding life through games, from the game theory developed by the Rand Corporation to guide foreign policy, including mutually assured destruction (MAD) as a deterrence strategy during the Cold War, to the evolutionary game theory developed by sociobiology to explain the workings of "selfish" and "altruistic" genes. Actors and agents in real life roleplay in games that also play them.[36] In sum, life is gamified.

The speculative modeling systems of game theory, information and predictive markets, bioinformatics, and information theory lead Crake to live bioengineering as transcendental illusion. In one scene, Crake describes the ethically dubious practices through which healthcare and pharmaceutical companies increase demand for their goods and services, given that illness "isn't productive. In itself, it generates no commodities and therefore no money." Companies such as HelthWyzer are in the unenviable position of developing cures for sick people, when their success will ultimately have a negative impact on their bottom line. So, under the guise of discovering diseases, HelthWyzer has in fact been creating new ones. This leads to the question of distribution. To solve that problem, they "put the hostile bioforms into their vitamin pills. . . . They have a really elegant

delivery system—they embed a virus inside a carrier bacterium, E. coli splice, doesn't get ingested, busts in the pylorus, and bingo!" (*Oryx*, 211). HelthWyzer spreads these diseases in heavily populated areas, immediately generating demand for the antidote that the company has already developed: "[T]hey practise the economics of scarcity, so they're guaranteed high profits" (ibid.). In a position much like that of the healthcare industry in the United States under privatization since the 1970s, the companies are encouraged to follow this path by the need for further profit: "The best diseases, from a business point of view . . . would be those that cause lingering illnesses. Ideally—that is, for maximum profit—the patient should either get well or die just before all of his or her money runs out. It's a fine calculation" (ibid.). HelthWyzer actually killed Crake's father because he was going to be a whistleblower on this process, and yet Crake can still respect HelthWyzer's "elegant" delivery system. Crake's business ethics uses biological warfare to determine who lives or dies based on their access to capital, the ability to purchase services and products from powerful companies like HelthWyzer. The mathematical formulae, axioms, and virtual games provide the tools to actualize a genetically-engineered material future for market humans.

Atwood depicts a world in which life has been instrumentalized to such a degree that Crake's goal of perfecting it leads him to annihilate the species *homo sapiens sapiens* because it cannot adequately adapt to the new realities. After graduating from Watson-Crick University, Crake sets up a research and development lab at RejoovenEsence called the Paradice Project, with the goal of developing the BlyssPlus pill and new beings that he calls Crakers. Crake has learned much from the Extinctathon MMORPG, and overpopulation and diminished resources were the problems to solve to win the game: "As a species we're in deep trouble, worse than anyone's saying. They're afraid to release the stats because people might just give up, but take it from me, we're running out of space-time. Demand for resources has exceeded supply for decades in marginal geopolitical areas, hence the famines and droughts; but very soon, demand is going to exceed supply *for everyone*" (*Oryx*, 295). Crake gathers at Paradice all of the best scientific minds, many of whom had been part of MaddAddam, an anti-authoritarian environmental group. They are forced to work for Crake or be handed over and killed by CorpSeCorp. (Atwood evokes here the scientists who worked for the Nazis and were then coopted by either the United States or the USSR during the Cold War.) The Paradice Project scientists work on a medicine called BlyssPlus to "eliminate the external causes of death. . . . War, which is to say misplaced sexual energy, which we consider to be a

larger factor than the economic, racial, and religious causes often cited. Contagious diseases, especially sexually transmitted ones. Overpopulation, leading . . . to environmental degradation and poor nutrition" (ibid., 293). The BlyssPluss pill fulfills the transhuman promise of redesigning human nature to allow for the satiation of unlimited libido and directs sexual energy. In Crake's algorithm, the biological imperative of unsatisfied libido leads to the social effects of jealousy and feelings of self-hatred and thus to war (ibid., 294). To solve this sociobiological problem, BlyssPluss immunizes the user against sexually transmitted diseases that could come with promiscuous sex, while simultaneously sterilizing the user in the interests of population control. BlyssPluss would allow people orgies while disabling the reproductive function, thus avoiding the "irrational" overproduction of humans, and mitigating overpopulation and promoting environmental sustainability.

Crake creates the Crakers species as if they were designed for a real-life role-playing game: he bioengineers away inefficient human values and practices. Crake creates this new transhuman species because humans, in his mind, have nearly destroyed the life-world, yet have an irrational fear of death and imagine that they can metaphorically live on by producing progeny. Crake demonstrates through this logic that he is a full-scale believer in Edmund Wilson's sociobiology, whereby human behavior has been entirely modeled by the evolutionary processes of natural selection.[37] He exhibits faith that by altering certain biological characteristics of the human, he can create a population with different behavior; he rewires the human to improve its efficiencies and quality of life. Atwood seems to be staging what critics of sociobiology such as Stephen Jay Gould, Richard Lewontin, and John Alcock call the "naturalistic fallacy," whereby descriptions of sociobiological processes become prescriptive of how things should be.[38] In other words, a description of the present, an "is," becomes how things should be, an "ought," which then becomes naturalized through repetition as an "is." Atwood seems to be critical of Wilson and other adherents of sociobiology because of their biological determinism.

The Crakers represent sociobiological debates and ideals taken to their logical extreme. They have supposedly been designed to serve as "floor models" for RejoovenEsence's "Paradice method." The method offers total choice to prospective parents, or "pre-selected" characteristics for whole populations, including beauty, disease resistance, and "natural" docility.

> It was amazing—said Crake—what once-unimaginable things had been accomplished by the team here. What had been altered was nothing less

> than the ancient primate brain. Gone were its destructive features, the features responsible for the world's current illnesses. For instance, racism—or, as they referred to it in Paradice, pseudospeciation—had been eliminated in the model group, merely by switching the bonding mechanism: the Paradice people simply did not register skin colour. Hierarchy could not exist among them, because they lacked the neural complexes that would have created it. Since they were neither hunters nor agriculturalists hungry for land, there was no territoriality: the king-of-the-castle hard-wiring that had plagued humanity had, in them, been unwired. They ate nothing but leaves and grass and roots and a berry or two; thus their foods were plentiful and always available. (*Oryx*, 305)

HelthWyzer wanted the "floor models" designed to show the entire range of attractive possibilities, with parents able to customize the specific features of their progeny to their own needs and wants. (The customer is indeed always right.) Crake's unrecognized faith in the "elegant concepts" of sociobiology leads him to project a world in his image, envisioning a future species bioengineered to avoid unwelcome attributes, yielding a population less differentiated and more controlled than current human populations, and more like the figures in the games he loved to master.

His uncritical genetic determinism and faith in sociobiology causes him to believe that he can engineer away human social characteristics that he finds vexing. The Crakers are beings designed to cope with the increasingly hostile environment due to degradation and scarce resources, and have no need for words, language, culture, and the irrational misery these have caused humans due to the latter's construction of complex, indeterminate, secondary meanings. The Crakers are multiethnic in appearance, with hairless skin and bodies—"they look like retouched fashion photos, or ads for a high-priced workout program" (*Oryx*, 100)—designed biologically to be resistant to the great scourges of humanity in a consumer society, namely aging and fatty deposits. Their skin, in its racially diverse colors, is engineered to be UV resistant, and they give off a scent that wards off insects. They can live off unrefined plant material, and if even that resource is scarce can survive on their own shit. Furthermore, they have healing powers; they can replicate a kind of purring, whose frequency causes cellular regeneration, thus replenishing diseased elements. Moreover, Crake has engineered out the underpinnings of courtship, unrequited love, monogamy, and jealousy over pair bonding by mixing ape DNA with that of the human, to perfect human bonding solely for reproductive purposes. When a female Craker ovulates, she turns blue in the buttocks and

abdomen, whereupon all the male Crakers' penises turn blue and become erect. The men begin a dance ritual for the female's attention and she chooses four men, whereupon they go at it until she becomes pregnant and the blue hue subsides.

Removing racism and reliance on hierarchical systems, jealousy, a sense of ownership of people, and irrational patterns of courtship indeed seem like elegant and altruistic ideas, yet Atwood speculates critically on the social effects of these new realities. Atwood's novels depict critically the appropriation of women's bodies as receptacles of male biological instinct, often violently through rape. Indeed, the younger women in the trilogy are all raped or forced into sex slavery due to essentialist notions of gender, and consequently come to perceive their bodies as their only means of exchange. This is perhaps Atwood's poke at certain arguments within Third Wave feminism and its faith in female empowerment through celebration of female sexuality and taking back of the body, as if the female body could be somehow magically freed from patriarchal norms, particularly in light of ubiquitous sexual assault. For example, Ren/Brenda in *The Year of the Flood* begins life in the compounds, flees with her mother to live with God's Gardeners in the pleeblands, and returns to her privileged life in the compounds, studying dance at Martha Graham Academy. Yet she runs out of money for tuition and tries to support herself as a dancer, only to find that she is unemployable except as a sex worker at Scales and Tails, a high-class strip club for animal fetishists. As a trapeze "specialist" providing "special services" dressed as a bird, she survives the catastrophe because she was in a decontamination module in the sex club after being exposed to some biologicals. Another character, Amanda Payne, survives a mass ecological disaster in Texas after which refugees are denied access to the rest of the United States and forced to fend for themselves, an evocation of Hurricane Katrina and the retreat of the federal government from concern with human welfare. Amanda Payne learns that her body provides one of the few mechanisms of "trade" that can enable her survival. Amanda is a resourceful, strong, and intelligent female character, but her body is reduced to a tool because of its fungibility. She tells another women that "love was useless, because it led you into dumb exchanges in which you gave too much away, and then you got bitter and mean" (*Flood*, 219), whereas she considers her body's strategic deployment a good trade. Oryx, a narrative cipher whose character comments on the narration of subjectivity—her entire background story may in fact have been choreographed by Crake—had endured being sold into sexual slavery by her family: "So I learned about life. . . . That everything has a price" (*Oryx*, 138–39).

Amanda and Ren survive the catastrophe, only to be multiply raped by the Painballers. In *MaddAddam*, Amanda and Ren will be raped also by the male Crakers, despite their creator Crake having ostensibly engineered violence out of their existence. For the Crakers reproduction is a biological function; when Amanda is ovulating, they assume that she is ready to fulfill her biological imperative and jump her. While Amanda survives this rape and ushers in a new species from cross-fertilization of human and Craker, violence toward women persists, even after the characteristic has supposedly been bioengineered away. The sociobiological game neglects to consider how social formations change over time.

Atwood also critiques the naturalistic, sociobiological fallacy of male intelligence through Crake. Crake designed the Craker men to be able to ward off possible adversaries by giving them potent urine with which to establish a zone safe from their potential predators: "Crake allotted the special piss to men only; he said they'd need something important to do, something that didn't involve childbearing, so they wouldn't feel left out. Woodworking, hunting, high finance, war, and golf would no longer be options, he'd joked" (*Oryx*, 155). Ironically, although he wanted to dispense with the idea of private property, by creating a relationship between the penis and the marking of territory, Crake reasserts the patriarchal norms he had tried to engineer out of existence. What starts as a bad joke becomes an unforeseen contingency that could have effects beyond the sociobiological thinking that dominates Crake's worldview. Crake had appropriated features of his Crakers from other creatures—the blue from the baboon, the dance of dongs to attract females from crabs, and the urine from dogs, wolves, and so forth: "Think of an adaptation, any adaptation, and some animal somewhere will have thought of it first" (ibid., 164). By identifying this point, Atwood shows that no matter how critical of anthropocentrism Crake is, he works within the limits of the known human world and his field of male and patriarchal experience. He merely adapts sequences of genetic coding from other species, extrapolating and hoping that their behaviors will glom onto the new creation. In the process, Crake demonstrates that his patriarchal upbringing affects his human knowledge, structuring his perception, observation, and conceptual formation.. His ethos is determined by his instrumental, male, and anthropocentric views of life as the culmination of its biological elements.

Crake believes only in the rational products of the mind and in the empirical world of science, and he finds irrational any unrepresentable conceptual and affective formations. For Crake, the human's greatest folly is faith or belief in the nonmaterial, in some transcendent entity such as

God or Nature with a capital *N*. In fact, he so adamantly wanted his Crakers to be free of what he called symbolic thinking that he hard-wired them to avoid such things: "Watch out for art, Crake used to say. As soon as they start doing art, we're in trouble. Symbolic thinking of any kind would signal downfall, in Crake's view. Next, they'd be inventing idols, and funerals, and grave goods, and the afterlife, and sin, and Linear B, and kings, and then slavery, and war" (*Oryx*, 361). With the Crakers he believes that he can eliminate such inefficiencies as reading, writing, and symbolic systems so that they will not be able to rebuild the society he so creatively destroyed. But the editing out of the capacity for symbolic systems creates a species with no concept of right or wrong, with no ethics, and no means of coping with predators in the hostile world in which they have been bioengineered to survive.

Crake enacts a scenario calculated to lead Jimmy to kill him despite their friendship, after Crake kills Oryx. He needs Jimmy to survive the Waterless Flood because Jimmy is a words person and possesses empathy, a quality Crake recognizes that the specialist scientists lack—plus, he tells Jimmy, "You have a great ability to sit around not doing much of anything. Just like them" (*Oryx*, 321). Not only could Jimmy spend hours reading books, which to Crake demonstrates an enormous capacity for enduring boredom, but also as a generalist he could adapt to new and previously inconceivable circumstances. By putting the Crakers in Jimmy's hands, however, Crake leaves them ripe for instruction in language and the symbolic thinking he has tried to edit out biologically. (Indeed, later, in *MaddAddam: A Novel*, the Crakers will pass on mythical origin stories and neotheological beliefs created by Jimmy and God's Gardeners followers.) Crake overlooks these concerns due to his faith in sociobiology and his lack of any ethics except business ethics. Atwood problematizes thereby the idea of the social construction of reality and the sociobiological view that human behavior is biologically determined. She does so by showing how much biology and genetic engineering can shape human behavior, but critiques the hubris of failing to acknowledge their limits. Crake wants to create a new world by destroying the old one—to reboot the game—but he fails to address all the contingencies involved, including the possibility that his game theories and algorithmic renderings of reality might be incomplete, that he may have failed to consider all variables. Nevertheless, Crake enacts a zero-sum game on the world, carrying out his perceived altruistic duty to save humanity by creating the Crakers ironically in his own image, even if entails annihilating most humans. For Crake, "All it takes is the elimination of one generation. One generation of anything.

Beetles, trees, microbes, scientists, speakers of French, whatever. Break the link in time between one generation and the next, and it's game over forever" (*Oryx*, 223). His fixation on editing out unpleasant human behaviors denies possibilities of human existence he overlooks. Crake's connection to speculative capital and power allows his speculative gaming to become reality. In the process, he unwittingly takes on the role of God, despite his own desire to remove the God function, the subject of my next section.

God and Nature Instrumentalized

Crake is a hypermaterialist when it comes to religion; "God is just a cluster of neurons" (*Oryx*, 192). He finds himself working with the God's Gardeners and MaddAddam due to his relationship with Pilar, also known as Eve Six, a woman with whom his father worked at HelthWyzer. Crake forms partnerships with these groups not because he exercises religious beliefs, but because he agrees with their conviction that humanity is set on a suicidal journey of endless economic growth. Ironically he can only have faith and hope in the posthuman hereafter that he believes he has the knowledge to choreograph by taking Extinctathon to the final level, where humans willfully usher in their own annihilation. The God's Gardeners are comprised of people like Pilar, whose faith in the idea of helping others through technology, biomedicine, and genetic engineering has been betrayed. Now, in Romantic fashion, they put faith in nature as a counterforce, a noncapitalist form of growth that they claim is not willful and self-interested and will not submit to anthropomorphic control. Pilar remarks, "Nature never does betray us. You do know that?" (*Flood*, 170).

The God's Gardeners are led by an elite group called the Adams and the Eves. Each of its members has shunned his or her former life and been reborn, taking the name Adam or Eve and a number; the group is led by a former bioengineer now known as Adam One. A large number of the Adams and Eves are people on the run from the aforementioned CorpSeCorps, such as Zeb, who once worked for the biotech HelthWyzer and now goes by the name "Adam Seven" or "the Maddaddam." Atwood reveals in the final book of the trilogy that Adam One and Zeb are the sons of a preacher who mixed oil economics with religion to create a powerful cabal, called the Church of PetrOleum. From their father they learned the importance of staying off the grid—their father has tried to kill them—and how religion can be used to justify economic goals and power politics. Adhering to a number of views within the ecology movement, the God's Gardeners believe that they can correct environmental degradation by eradicating the human footprint. Some members, such as Adam One and perhaps Zeb, take

this idea to its logical extreme and erase vast sectors of humanity before it can continue to imprint its destruction on the natural world. Atwood focuses on two ideas that cut across religion and capitalist science, namely the distinction between the ineffable—the inexpressible spirit of the universe that suggests connectedness—and the materiality of the body as a limit. The interchange between the ineffable and the material was played out in the previous section of this chapter in terms of how words and numbers purportedly control epistemic limits through the algorithm of the game. Here I argue that nature, God, and bodies become tools for understanding complex processes that exceed the limits of human knowledge.

Atwood's trilogy stages the desire to transcend humanity by overcoming the materiality of the body through a subtheme of the beauty industry's standardization of people's appearances. Between RejoovenEsence and AnooYoo's spa franchises, Atwood comments on capturing transitory youth:

> The Spa had no big secrets to defend, so the guards did nothing but monitor the ladies who were going in, frightened by the first signs of droop and pucker, then going out again, buffed and tightened and resurfaced, irradiated, and despotted.
>
> But still frightened, because when might the whole problem—the whole *thing*—start happening to them again? The whole signs-of-mortality thing. The whole *thing* thing. Nobody likes it . . . being a body, a thing. Nobody wants to be limited in that way. We'd rather have wings. Even the word *flesh* has a mushy sound to it. (*Flood*, 264)

Mortality itself is the thing-ness of the human, which is why transhuman immortality is so attractive, as a way to address the fear of finitude and transcend the body's thingness. This limit of the body's cellular degeneration and mortality are intertwined with their eventual monetization in consumer capitalism; thus AnooYoo staffers are reminded, "We're selling hope" (*Flood*, 264). The fear of being a thing generates desire to control time, precisely what human aging puts in stark relief, making fear of aging ripe for monetization. Crake's attempt to recreate paradise on earth with the Paradice Project at RejoovenEsence is an attempt to restore the human to an imagined condition before its fall into time and mortality.

The God's Gardeners are aware that the body has been colonized by consumer materialism, which treats it as a thing to be used and reused by humans. To save their souls, which for the God's Gardeners are an element of the ideational universe divorced from their bodies, followers must renounce eating meat, adapt to their environment rather than seek to conquer it, and recognize that all forms of life have equal existence. Adam One preaches that God is like nature, and

> God is pure spirit; so how can anyone reason that the failure to measure the Immeasurable proves its non-existence? God is indeed the No thing, the No-thingness, that through and by which all material things exist; for if there were not such a No-thingness, existence would be so crammed full of materiality that no one thing could be distinguished from another. The mere existence of separate material things is a proof of the No-thingness of God. (*Flood*, 51)

God and nature stand in for the nonutilitarian facets of the environment and cosmos that cannot be rendered into a cost-benefit analysis, budget, or speculative modeling system; they are the ontological plane that connects and differentiates them. God exists in the speculative metaphysical realm where faith and belief enter to fill the void of the unrepresentable/inexpressible—that which exceeds human conceptualization and instrumentalization. Whereas Crake believed in biology as a stable ontology for social engineering, enabling him to remake the human thing, Adam One and God's Gardeners believe in a transcendent soul connected to nature as a way to transcend thingness. The notions of nature and faith held by Adam One and the God's Gardeners involve commitment to an ecological worldview that can see immortality in nature and the soul, while the body is stuck within the limits of time and space, in its material thingness.

The God's Gardeners' hope is rooted in a Romantic idea of nature as itself identified with the good, while the world has fallen due to human rapaciousness and infection of the planet. This vision of humanity is one that they share with Crake, and like him they want to see the end of the species. However, they view nature through the prism of Romanticism and therefore see it, like the aesthetic, as having a restorative function for the human in the wake of industrialization and instrumentalization. The God's Gardeners also have a nonessential notion of nature as impermanence and as historical, thereby dramatically throwing us into the middle of two Romanticisms and two aesthetic projects, as Timothy Morton puts it in *Ecology Without Nature*. For Morton, nature is permanence as both essence and flux, that which stands in for chaos, unrepresentability, and what he describes as the aesthetic of world-making. To address this view of nature, Morton comes up with the term *ecomimesis*, "a specific rhetoric that generates a fantasy of nature as a surrounding atmosphere, palpable but shapeless."[39] Borrowing Morton's ideas on how writing stands in for nature itself, we can see such a rhetoric at work in any symbolic system that lets algorithms and words fill in the atmosphere, including the concepts we use for reality. Yet our fixing of an "out there" for nature has more to do with the immediate observational limits of

anthropocentric beings than with nature being imbued with a true, good will recognizable by humans. Morton counters with "ambient poetics" to fill this gap between the world that humans perceive and its ontological existence. He indicates that the rendering of nature involves several simultaneous affects, sensations, and rhetorical strategies for fixing actions to generate a level of meaning. This process yields an approximation of conceptual clarity for what cannot be adequately represented by the human mind. What Morton calls an "atmospherics" at times flies in the face of the brute materiality of experience in its affective, sensational, and conceptual complexities. In my view, Atwood portrays the God's Gardeners as anthropomorphizing nature, bestowing on it a will, which blinds them to nature's actual indifference, particularly toward human beings. In the process, they reify nature into a thing, not unlike Crake in his production of the Craker hominids—and not unlike financial and neoliberal capitalism, which, as I have discussed throughout this book, reifies life itself.

Conclusion

Crake, Adam One, Pilar, and perhaps Zeb exhibit speculative faith due to a sense of being thrown into the middle of life—Heideggerian thrownness—that causes terrible dis-ease, particularly with regard to the materiality of the body and its instrumentality. Yet, they all seem stupefied by the body as an object of willful needs, an object that is embedded in life and defies coherent conceptualization. As I discussed earlier, Crake puts that no-thing-ness of material existence into the biologically engineered form of hominids that nevertheless are the objects of his creation and the embodiment of his theories, allowing him to dispense with the flawed human thing. Crake will prove a master of the game, to the point where he takes his Grandmaster status on Extinctathon to the next level and purposely wipes out the human species due to what I diagnosed above as his faith in sociobiology. Crake recenters himself as the Creator of the Crakers, unwittingly becoming a potential God despite his sociobiological faith in human intelligence to design beings biologically freed of symbolic systems. Crake's faith lies, however, with the naturalistic fallacies of sociobiology. He will live on through the Crakers. Indeed, despite his hatred of human reproduction, he in effect creates a lineage and affiliation through the hominids he engineers.[40] He becomes a God as an absent presence when his material existence ends due to the pandemic he unleashes.

Atwood shapes a complex world from the tired nature/technology debates, as God's Gardeners preach antitechnology while using technology,

building a vast network of technophiles intent on destroying the system. She stages her world through complexity theory and nonlinear dynamic systems to show the anthropomorphization of nature when humans confront the limits of their understanding of matter. Matter is not a fixed state, but sets of self-organizing properties that create mutable networks of relations. Atwood suggests that recent work in ecology and the new materialisms describing the embeddedness of all things in life, a dynamic ontological plane, neglects to consider how it can be captured and futurally leveraged by speculative capital. As I discussed above, the biotech and genetic engineering firms that monopolize life in *Oryx and Crake* turn all facets of existence into measurable things, games, algorithmic calculations, or speculative abstractions, dividing everything into units that are made more human-like through values. Atwood diagnoses how educational strategies such as cost-benefit analysis and results-oriented learning treat life as a game or business plan to be mastered, so that education has become little more than a speculative project for social engineering. She portrays through the God's Gardeners how the drive to critique anthropocentrism can lead to a fundamentalist, theological worldview that through its own anthropocentrism instrumentalizes nature through analogical ideas. Atwood's characters ironically either place the human at the center, as the entrepreneurial bioengineer who can create forms of life beyond the human, or displace the human in the name of a sacred figuration of God or nature, seen as an immutable essence that nevertheless works through human agents: God's (Chosen) Gardeners. In the God's Gardeners, but also with respect to Crake's illusory *tabula rasa*, the world itself becomes a model on which to speculate, and on which human desires can be cathected, in the vain attempt to overcome bodily mortality. As God is nature for the God's Gardeners, they all must confront nature's indifference to human life, and yet act as if God and nature have willful agency. They view God anthropocentrically, which permits them the belief that they live on spiritually after the death of their bodies. God becomes instrumentalized to the anthropomorphic needs of the God's Gardeners. Atwood is critiquing the instrumentalization of life by those who put too much faith in nonanthropocentric forces, including, I think, the faith that a posthuman future of thinking objects, equality of objects, dynamic relations, and metaphysical speculation will redeem the universe.

The aforementioned Timothy Morton, Graham Harman, Ian Bogost, Quentin Meillassoux, and Bryant Levi seek to counter the anthropocentric drives that Atwood critiques with their object-oriented ontology; they think things as withdrawing into the nonrelational possibilities of being.

For OOO, the belief in human dominance and human thought takes humans far away from existence into symbolic systems, and Meillassoux, for one, sees mathematics as the way out of the impasse of anthropocentric centrism. In terms of the world of *Oryx and Crake* he is undoubtedly a "numbers person," and subject to the critiques made in this chapter, in addition to those made in chapter 3. As I discussed in that chapter, OOO's discourse of things resonates too closely with both consumer capitalism's production of a universe of autonomous things, and financial capital's vivisection of life into fungible units of unrealized assets or debts. Moreover, Ian Bogost proposes an ontology in which all things and being interact and perceive one another, but can only be understood metaphorically or analogically. Rather than envisioning the possibility of arriving at understanding through the use of words, language, or mathematics and algorithms, Bogost proposes ontography, in which everything is equally produced and exists equally before symbolic systems, a metaphysical nonhierarchical system of communication similar to preverbal images and telepathy. In addition to the fact that this metaphor and analogy is transmitted through the symbolic system of language that Bogost seeks to transcend, this centering on objects as a way to think agency beyond subjectivism does not weigh bioengineering's reification of life, or how metaphors and analogies are also reifications of the dynamism of life. The proponents of OOO offer much for metaphysically thinking all that exceeds human knowledge, yet the role of process and power, politics and social inequality seem incidental to their philosophical analysis. The ontological equality of all seems to them the antidote to anthropocentrism, a curiously utopian premise given the dynamic physical and material forces of objects and emergent hierarchies that OOO scholars routinely discuss. Indeed, I would add that their discourse shares the same utopian apoliticism as that of cultural studies scholars, as noted in chapter 2, and of human rights and humanitarians within neoliberalist processes that I critiqued in chapters 4 and 5.

To struggle with these possible realities, thinkers influenced by the work of Gilles Deleuze, including Elizabeth Grosz, Manuel DeLanda, and developmental biologist Stanley Shostack, have been emphasizing the ontological dynamism of matter and life. As I discussed above, Deleuze theorizes ontology as process-oriented, and proposes a notion of being as perpetual self-differentiation through connections and creations of preindividual assemblages, relations, fluxes and flows, acknowledging that matter is itself dynamic.[41] Borrowing from Gilbert Simondon, Deleuze makes especial reference to the processes of individuation in which becoming does not emerge into a form to arrive at something; instead, difference

is individuation of modes of being, and so becoming *is* continuous variation. For Simondon, "[T]he individual is to be understood as having a relative reality, occupying only a certain phase of the whole being in question—a phase that therefore carries the implication of a preceding pre-individual state, and that, even after individuation, does not exist in isolation, since individuation does not exhaust in the single act of its appearance all the potentials embedded in the pre-individual state."[42] Simondon, who borrows heavily from biological discourses, diagrams ontogenesis, which indicates that there is no pre-established form of the organism, individual, or self, but rather "phases of being," some expressed, others expressed but unrecognized within dynamically organized networks. Instead, agency, including human agency, should be thought as contingent stratifications and destratifications, assemblages, in relationship to dynamic fields of individuation. Life as the previously unrepresentable operates as a series of connections between networks of relations, some stable, some fluctuating, of a vibrant materialism that calls into question any sense of a preformed material, metaphysical essence, or perfect "outside."

In this regard, Deleuze's metaphors for ontology draw heavily from biology and describe the processes of cells, many of which have only recently been viewed as working through these dynamic conducts. In the aftermath of Darwin, such ideas as natural selection and atavism led to a view of arranged life with the species seen as the stable figuration within dynamic transformation. Yet the species is the culmination of a process of adaptation that has already happened, solidifying a now-stable limit between the various distinguishable species.[43] Indeed, theories of life and germs-lines via August Weissman describe a gene-centric view of life; his theory of the germ-line marks a distinct boundary between hereditary germline cells that pass on traits and are involved with reproductive functions and somatic cells that consistently renew. This Weismannian bias described cells, nonetheless, as working like entropic machines; that is, they eventually break down or stop developing due to use or old age, or due to a finite number of cellular replications. However, new developments in studying cancer cells and human embryonic stem cells indicate that these cells do not reach senescence, and that some cells are "biologically immortal" and can continue to divide even when the organism is dead, or when separated from the organism.[44] As a result, reducing life to the limits of the organism neglects all the teeming forms of life that continue to act beyond it. This includes the pluripotent and multipotent cells most explicitly studied in embryonic stem cells that do not follow the Hayflick limit, the number of times that cells can divide before degrading.[45] Furthermore,

given that stem cells are cells that have not differentiated into specific tissues or into organisms, they can be applied into new contexts or parts of the body, thus allowing for the regeneration of tissue, including, it is hoped by scientists, regenerating spinal cord cells, which might be used to treat spinal cord injuries, and regenerating brain tissue, which might be used to treat Alzheimer's patients, and the creating of new ears, skin, and so forth. Research shows how stem cells can transdifferentiate and actually become expressed in new tissue forms, regardless of where they originate in the organism.[46] Yet, as Stanley Shostack points out, life is perpetual creation and waste, as cells live and die at every moment, so thinkers should not focus on conquering one without considering the effects of the other.[47] Bringing this to bear on my analysis, in my view Atwood critiques two forms of the search for immortality, the immortality imagined by transhumanism, that is, an immortality achieved by the enhancement of human life through technology and bioengineering, and the immortality of the soul and nature imagined by the God's Gardeners. Both quests are futurally directed to unobservable elements of the world and the limits of human knowledge through symbolic imagining, despite the obvious limits of words, numbers, and algorithms. Atwood suggests a concept of the human that is a mixture of the figurative and the material, but whose anthropocentrism is a limit that cannot be overcome through speculation as transcendental illusion or arguments on the persistence, dare I say immortality, of things. Atwood's mixture of figurative and material agency resonates with Simondian transindividuated catalysts of agency. Her imagining of various bioengineered forms of life as well as the post-catastrophe human characters embody new figures of thought that indicate ahuman agency.

Through the MaddAddam trilogy, Atwood stages the critical possibilities of speculative fiction. To critique the remaking of life by the epistemic systems of biotechnology and capitalism, she addresses the historicity of the human, while acknowledging the human's perpetual creation via the ahuman. She indicates that ironically, indeterminacy and contingency may be the essence of the human, due to the emergence of the processes of life I outlined above. Rather than focusing only on subject positions or situationality and trying to come up with new signification strategies to transcend them for a politics to come, Atwood's speculative fiction considers the affective relations of existence that already exist, but that we have not been able to see. Atwood's MaddAddam texts operate *without* the presupposition of the idea of the human as subject or object, as a centered or a self-actualized consciousness, subjectivity, being, or a literate national/linguistic subject. In *MaddAddam*, Atwood demonstrates the emergent

intelligences of the bioengineered hominids, the Crakers, whose existence embodies the speculative production of the human's other. The Crakers learn that they can communicate telepathically with pigoons, who themselves are an ahuman amalgamation of human elements, as they comprise human genetic material and demonstrate greater capacities of empathy than humans. The pigoons communicate to the Crakers that they have burial rituals for their dead, a cultural development Vico took to be an important marker of the human, a point I discussed at length in chapter 2, which is why the pigoons take umbrage when humans eat them. Ultimately, both Craker and pigoon prefer peaceful coexistence with humans in a hostile environment, because they, unlike the humans, recognize their own species limit. Atwood portrays life functioning in the manner of stem cells, which are perpetually connecting to express themselves through both organic and nonorganic structures that are themselves constantly adapting. Life as process functions through dispersed networks of coalescing relations or forces that are in flux, reversible, contingent, and dynamically permutating. In closing, I propose that thinking the human ontologically as dynamically networked life and process, as ahuman, may frustrate the instrumentalization that I have diagnosed throughout this book. In the next chapter, I analyze how speculative fiction can rethink the reification and monetization of life when these processes are taken to their logical extremes through the vivisection of the body, its transformation into monetized units through the metrics of organ donation. Speculative fictions orient us to possibilities of existence beyond known phenomenon, and to the many forms of agency being created as subjects and as desubjectified beings that coexist among us. In the absence of speculative fictions, we may struggle with an instrumentalization of the human so thorough that its critics make a fetish out of a posthuman objecthood that is supposed to somehow transcend the human. What about the humans already here? Thereby we attend a transgenic rough beast—or thing—slouching toward Bethlehem, ecologically repurposed and waiting to be born in the laboratories of the biotechs.

CHAPTER 8

Reification of the Human

Global Organ Harvesting and Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*

Nobel Laureate Kazuo Ishiguro's 2005 novel *Never Let Me Go* follows a group of genetic clones who are created as wards of the British health service because they serve a utilitarian function: They are manufactured for the purpose of having their vital organs harvested until their deaths.[1] The text centers on an elite class of clones raised at an institution called Hailsham by Guardians, who function as a mixture of prison guards, educators, and career counselors. The Guardians condition the clones to relish their predestined existence as carers and organ donors for human "originals." Interestingly, the Guardians call the clones *student*s and use their training in the liberal arts to develop the clones' capacities for empathy. The Romantic ideal of creative and inventive poetic imagination indicates their "human" qualities. Nevertheless, the clones, though fully human at the species level and trained in the classics to develop their humanistic character, are not perceived empathetically as either natural or human by the unseen "original" humans of the story. For them, the clones exist as objects of medical science to promote their own health and well-being. Created as living warehouses of fresh organs ripe for harvesting, the clones' lives are taken so that the "natural born" humans can live. The clones are thrown into the

nonhuman moral and ethical realm as if they were animals, technological objects/things, or Cartesian organic machinic beasts.

Indeed, through presenting the clones as organ donors who live to die, Ishiguro dramatizes what I have diagnosed in earlier chapters as the legal no-human's-zone. In the novel, the clones embody the lives of the "other" in present-day humanism and political liberalism: the swarms of people reduced to being "expendable life" because they are excluded from the circuits of capital and from integration into the global market.[2] Yet Ishiguro's twist on this issue is to show the socialization of instrumental human subjects who, while they are achieving humanist character development, confront their "uneven development" and objecthood when measured against "natural" humans. The novel may be read as a speculative fiction that comments on the biopolitical reality of the international division of labor and the trafficking of organs from the global South to the North, as well as the precarious lives of all marginalized populations. Ishiguro further depicts how even the dispossessed can read themselves into the market human and entrepreneurial formations I discussed earlier. By developing a story about these "other" humans, Ishiguro reminds us of the legally invisible who operate in the shadows of informal economies, and whose existence is tolerated due to their utility—in the novel, those who are useful in serving and providing organs for humans better integrated into the market. While the speculative fictional world Ishiguro envisions, inhabited by a group of humans reproduced solely to become organ donors, is certainly dreadful, it is nowhere near as horrific as the actual intersection of organ transplantation and uneven global development in our neoliberal present. Ishiguro's invention stirs our uncomfortable awareness that there are humans who, like the clones in his story, live among us unseen and unheard, and that conceiving of organ donation solely as an act of altruism may render us blind to new stages of capitalism's Taylorist instrumentalization of the body.

Ishiguro's genetic clones, readied for harvesting, demand ethical reconsideration of the body as a site of materialist resistance to intolerable economic, political, or social policies. Ishiguro's text, furthermore, raises major bioethical concerns about the body: What are the limits of the human? How is life itself recognized within anthropocentric limits? How do we mark the relationship between self and other within the biological species-limit, and yet beyond the categories of race, ethnicity, and gender? How do we empathize with others? What steps should be taken to prolong human life and at what costs? What nonhuman or subservient human others (loosely understood) can be sacrificed for the betterment of human life?

While these bioethical concerns are extremely complex, they often assume self-owning subjects; they do not fully address agents such as Ishiguro's clones, whose subjectivity is created only through their status as a network of objects and modes of individuation. Earlier chapters of this book have shown the pervasiveness of governmental techniques of market and state in creating nonhuman subjectivities outside legal protections—real-world posthumans—and reifying life as a network or field of objects, things, and fungible units. I have examined how the transactional forms of human subjectivity are created and/or captured by capital through the sovereign subject, culture, the economic subject, the subjects of rights, and the speaking subject seeking recognition in language. To interrogate these concerns through Ishiguro's text, I build on my analysis of the status of the body in Atwood and return to my discussion, in chapter 3, of Karl Marx and György Lukács on the "reification of the human." I focus on the reification of the body as an aggregation of fungible body parts within the market, but in reverse.[3] Rather than a thing being endowed with human qualities as part of the social hieroglyphic of the commodity, or the carving up of life to function like a derivative, the human is rendered into a network of organic shares by technological or economic processes. As I discussed in chapter 3 in connection with financial capital and my critique of object-oriented ontology (OOO), the human becomes a structured asset of monetized parts or things in circulation.

Human reification challenges bioethicists and cultural critics alike to reflect on how the ideas of human dignity and respect for bodily integrity no longer serve as barriers, symbols of the uniqueness and inviolability of the human species, due to new advances in biotechnology. The clones in *Never Let Me Go* are produced as fungible units of life to be harvested, external to any legal protections whatsoever, despite their being recognizable as members of the species and thus theoretically entitled to natural rights. They are even in possession of English, one of the recognized languages of rights. The clones never even think to rebel, but if they were to do so, their calls, like the bleats of the cloned sheep Dolly, would fall on deaf ears, because they would be unable to connect to any governmental function that would protect them. In the eyes of the world that Ishiguro's novel projects, the clones are a field of autonomous objects for harvesting. As such, they are an occasion to think about legal questions that posthuman scholars do not consider. For example, does a human kidney, as biological material or thing, have rights unto itself, or only when it is connected to the speaking (human) subject, the network of organs within which it has a vital function. Ishiguro's text suggests the need for bioethics to re-interrogate

the limits of contemporary concepts of humanity, which always presuppose the givenness of the human, despite the practice of rendering the human into parts. The clones mark the "thingness" of the human, a quality that is often overlooked in passionate defenses of the species other by contemporary bioethicists, philosophers such as Martha Nussbaum, and the adherents of OOO, as I discussed in chapter 3.[4] Indeed, the human conceived as discarded thing or junk may offer an explanation for the failures of empathy to mitigate intolerable human suffering.

To challenge the instrumentalization of the human, we need to take the reification of life—the human's material other—more seriously than we do in merely establishing the autonomy of objects and nonhuman beings as we carve out our ethicopolitical positions. By thinking the human's objecthood as *homo oeconomicus*, utilitarian object, locus of natural rights, and transparent object of communication, I have been developing a set of strategies and tactics, such as translation and speculative fictions, for conceiving ahumans as fields of individuating potential. Why is this necessary? So that political projects can think possibilities of existence beyond the hacked-up totem pole of dignity, market existence, human rights, and nonanthropocentric objects. Emergent, eventful pre-individuations can provide the key to thinking agency differently at the molecular level, to creating different combinations of collective forms of existence—such as the collective assemblages of enunciation that I discussed in my chapter on translation; haecceity, discussed in my chapter on utilitarian humanism; and more generally, speculative fictions, as means toward the creation of agency through the event of reading. Indeed, Ishiguro's speculative fiction, his clones' confrontation with altruism and bioethics, allows me to bring together the various strands of my argument from earlier chapters.

Hailsham and Altruism Markets

Never Let Me Go begins in the middle of a narration in which Kathy H. recounts her life story of growing up in the privileged clone farm and school known as Hailsham, and it highlights her close friendships with fellow residents Tommy and Ruth. Kathy addresses an audience that, unlike the novel's implied reader, is in the know about the donor program and the vocation of the clones. The novel's setting in the late 1990s indicates a belatedness, whereby the clones live among us and "pass" as fully human.[5] In the microcosm of Hailsham, the creation of art, primarily poems and paintings, is the means of production, consumption, and exchange. Through the accumulation of sentimental and affective objects, the clones can develop

their "characters" and individual selves. Art, therefore, is the means of production for Hailsham's humanizing project, meant to offer the clones a more varied and rich life before they donate their vital organs. Trained in the classical tradition of *Ut pictura poesis*, the clones produce art with the idea that their best work will be donated to the mysterious Gallery of the mysterious Madame. Madame is known by the clones as a special person who comes periodically to cull their best works for her art collection. She decides who is creative and successful, and normalizes the transactional nature of the students' relationships with others; the students learn that they should donate their artistic creations for the pleasure of others.

Student artworks that fail to make it into the Gallery become fungible objects in Hailsham's Exchanges, where the students trade their artistic productions with one another, in a generalized Hailsham system of exchange and compulsory donation. By allowing them to own art created by their brethren, these Exchanges ironically become the clones' way of learning about personal property. The artworks comprise the clones' personal "collections," replicating Madame's elite gallery of objects and establishing archives for affectively carving out their individual existences on the basis of the artifacts they accumulate.[6] The artwork as transactional reality creates a hermetic system of fungible donations, art for other art, but also establishes art as a form of value, as creative expression and self-development. The students can also receive tokens for their art, which function as their medium of exchange (their money) for purchasing items at the Sales, the Hailsham equivalent of the open market. The Sales allows the students to buy goods from outside Hailsham. Yet the goods themselves are donations, items that have become obsolete for an "original" human consumer society, and that come to Hailsham rather than going to organizations to help the less fortunate such as Oxfam or Goodwill. The Sales further standardize the process of self-development through transactional donation (a process I have discussed over several chapters), even if the students do not understand from where the items come.[7] The normalization brought about by the Exchanges and Sales formalizes a social hieroglyphic of value among the clones for measuring life, marking those who are worthy and those who are not via their development of art. Indeed, one character, Tommy, fails to have any of his artworks chosen by Madame for the ostensible Gallery and fears that his soul will never measure up to the souls of the other Hailsham clones. By making art a mechanism of social value and a fungible product, the school teaches the clones to conceive of their creativity as an instrumental function, which is a useful tool for normalizing their organ donation. The students' creativity becomes

both a way for them to follow the injunction "know thyself," and a way to know their subjectivity as itself a transaction, while creating a sense of self separate from, though still resolutely tied to donation of, their internal organs.

Indeed, the clones' possibilities for successful self-actualization begin and end through donation. In accord with the injunctions of moral philosophers and ethicists in the Kantian traditions, the clones exhibit their humanity as beings capable of conscience, empathy, and sympathy. This humanist tool, as Shaheem Black has shown, is used to exploit empathy as a form of use value, as they are trained to live for others.[8] The empathy of the clones does not allow them to imagine themselves as moral and aesthetic agents in the place of others, but they can imagine their organs emplaced in others as fulfillment of a categorical imperative. As one character, Ruth, puts it with disturbing calm, "I was pretty much ready when I became a donor. It felt right. After all, it's what we're supposed to be doing, isn't it?" (*Never*, 227). Chillingly, the Guardians train the clones to find virtue and achieve full selfhood when they "complete"—when so many of their internal organs have been harvested that their own bodies die. Completion defines their life goal. In effect, they become full subjects when they have completely fulfilled their status as vivisected objects. They live on through the bodies of others; their death paradoxically "completes" their subjectivity. Their actions of donating organs become a universal maxim. They become human "ends in themselves" only when they no longer have any viable organs to donate, and they die.

"Completed" subjectivity gives Ishiguro's clones a sense of autonomous subjectivity and empathetic "humanness" within a predetermined field of aesthetic, moral, and intellectual conventions that render their bodies and souls into objects. As Franco Berardi puts it, in light of contemporary capitalism, the soul is another product of industrialization: "Not the body but the soul becomes the subject of techno-social domination. . . . Capital valorization becomes more and more independent from any conscious activity and the very possibility of human political action. . . . That means that control over the body is exerted by the modeling of the soul."[9] Subject to processes akin to what Gramsci describes as the industrialization of consciousness, what Foucault analyzes as biopolitical normalization, and Rancière calls the distribution of the sensible, the clones' souls are always extensions of their bodies, so that their range of thought and freedom is limited, as a means of social control. As literary critic Matthew Eatough claims in his commentary on Ishiguro, the clones' "subjective affect can be translated into objective measurements."[10] Through their humanistic edu-

cation the clones develop an "ontological indifference" to their bodies; the same techniques are seen at work in the "quality of life" values used with regard to organ transplantation candidates. These values are called upon in the difficult weighing of which candidates are deemed worthy of organ transplants, in an economy of organ scarcity. For Eatough, the transformation of subjective affect into "concrete measures of time" shows the instrumentalization of life into a generalized cost-benefit analysis, whereby the time of existence is itself reduced to fungible qualities. Eatough focuses on "quality-adjusted life year" (QALY) values, which measure the quality of value-added life in comparison to the costs of the medical procedure: "The 'points of indifference' used to calculate QALY values indicate that, for the cultivated self of present-day *Bildungsromans*, the body is not an essential and inalienable personal possession, but instead an object whose normative relation to the affective self is one of indifference."[11] For Eatough, the body reduced to a fungible unit of time shows its separation from the affective self in becoming an instrumental thing to be put in circulation, leading to the ontological indifference. I disagree, however, that in Ishiguro's novel there is an indifference to the body and self through *bildung*; instead, through reification there is a full determination of existence as organic corporeal extension, whereby interiority (soul) and exteriority (body) have become fully coextensive in a network of things. Indifference only emerges to the idea of the body as self-possession, yet empathy through character development facilitates the clones' body and soul becoming things/objects put in circulation due to their transactionality.[12] Thereby Ishiguro comments critically on the instrumentalization of life through the trafficking of empathy.

Let me elaborate. The clones learn how their status as things in circulation goes beyond the organs in their body during the climax of *Never Let Me Go*. The students discover that their artwork, ostensibly reflecting their interior character, their consciousness and souls, had also been an asset to be mined for its fungibility for nonprofit fundraising. Tommy and Kathy go to Miss Emily and Madame, the two main forces behind Hailsham, to seek a deferral by proving Tommy's "Gallery theory": that they have sufficient souls because they are capable of love. Miss Emily reveals that their logic is impeccable: "We took away your art because we thought it would reveal your souls. Or to put it more finely, we did it to prove you had souls at all" (*Never*, 260). Tommy and Kathy have known all their lives that they are special, different from "natural birth" humans. But they are perplexed that "natural" humans could perceive them as technical objects, lacking character, consciousness, or soul. Their art, however, has also provided the

transactional means to encourage donations to a cause. The art, rather than just a marker of their souls, was used as a tool for fundraising in support of the altruistic movement to treat the clones humanely, culminating in a period of success in the late 1970s, when elite clone farms such as Hailsham had the support of "cabinet ministers, bishops, and all sorts of famous people" (262). Hailsham was an attempt to prove that the clones have souls, not in order to dispense with the donor system, but to offer the clones the opportunity to enjoy the idea of autonomy through creation until they were killed, an altruistic *mission civilisatrice* for the biotech age. Indeed, after Miss Emily tells the students that the deferrals they seek do not exist, that they must accept their mortality and let their lives run their natural course, she describes the good work of Hailsham in sheltering them: "You wouldn't be who you are today if we'd not protected you. You wouldn't . . . have lost yourselves in *your* art and *your* writing. Why should you have done, knowing what lay in store for each of you? You would have told us it was all pointless, and how could we have argued with you?" (268; italics added). If Kathy is any indication, the clones can live productive lives until their mid-thirties. Hailsham and the other elite clone farms were a humanitarian gesture to foster their happiness while ensuring their compliance, while also assuaging any stings of conscience among the "natural humans" who supported these institutions, for creating humans whose only value is through organs that must be donated.

Hailsham can be seen as an example of the public-private joint ventures of altruistic nongovernmental nonprofits that serve human needs in the wake of the welfare state's diminishment; it is a domestic version of the kind of humanitarian organizations I discussed in chapter 4. These NGO nonprofits are professionalized and follow the metrics of the marketplace, and thereby are subject to its whims. Hailsham was little more than a singular philanthropic organization, seemingly in competition for funding with similar elite clone "schools" (Glenmorgan, Saunders Trust) that like it lost their funding due to the Morningdale scandal: "Our little movement, we were always too fragile, always too dependent on the whims of our supporters. So long as the climate was in our favour, so long as a corporation or a politician could see a benefit in supporting us, then were we able to keep afloat. But it had always been a struggle, and after Morningdale, after the climate changed, we had no chance. The world didn't want to be reminded how the donation programme really worked. . . . In other words, my dears, they wanted you back in the shadows" (*Never*, 264–65). The natural humans wanted a steady supply of vital organs, regardless what horrors had to be perpetrated to create the now-expected resource.

Morningdale was a scientist who had used a bioengineering technology to create designer babies that would be superior to ordinary humans, biologically institutionalizing the socialized hierarchies of life discussed above with regard to the clones and the "natural" humans. Any measure that draws attention to the technological element of the human, or biological enhancement of humans, is morally repugnant for exceeding bioethical limits—except, ironically, the donation program, due to its utility. Corporate philanthropy for Hailsham dried up because of the negative publicity around Morningdale, showing the limits of humanitarian altruism. In this context, I believe that Ishiguro is speaking to the normalized violence underwriting global consumer society, encompassing for example the circulation of cheap clothing and electronics produced in sweatshops as a way to make up for stagnant wages over the last forty years.[13] Moreover, he speaks directly to the illegal trafficking of organs for transplantation, as well as to the destruction of natural resources and the environment for the sake of unfettered growth. The products are wanted, but they are produced in shadowy "elsewheres," often in conditions of intolerable misery, in order to ensure low costs for consumers.[14]

After Tommy and Kathy speak with Miss Emily, they must reconcile themselves to the fact that their souls have in fact been treated, much like their organs and bodies, as fungible things, in this instance used in the service of fundraising. The clones' souls were tools or things used to support Miss Emily's humanitarian experiment in offering the clones a better life, enabling them to see themselves as human as they moved through the industrialized process of organ donation. (Is this all that different from being human under neoliberalism? The market creates market humans, a timeless, universal, totalizing subjectivity; only those who are worthy are granted social mobility and are able to transcend the immediate conditions of their existence due to their "special" status.) Indeed, even the philanthropies reproduce the hierarchies of class and social status for the soon-to-be-killed clones. Nevertheless, at the end Kathy and Tommy are told by their former Guardian how much they were given by Hailsham: "I hope you can appreciate how much we were able to procure for you. Look at you both now! You've had good lives, you're educated and cultured" (*Never*, 261). The "gift" of education and culture is the "altruistic" medium of exchange for their organs and lives. In effect, Miss Emily is asking Kathy and Tommy to reason within the instrumental logic of the charity market—emphasizing how fleeting people's emotions and feelings are, how "stuff happens," thus indicating the limits to her own empathy toward what she sees as technohuman monstrosities before her:

> I can see . . . that it might look as though you were simply pawns in a game. It can certainly be looked at like that. But think of it. You were lucky pawns. There was a certain climate and now it's gone. You have to accept that sometimes that's how things happen in this world. People's opinions, their feeling, they can go one way, then the other. It just so happens that you grew up at a certain point in the process. (266)

To Miss Emily's attempt to make her and Tommy feel grateful and lucky, Kathy responds with her own existential repugnance: "'It might be just some trend that came and went,' I said. 'But for us, it's our life'" (ibid.). This interchange shows that ironically, Miss Emily cannot engage in the empathy toward Kathy and Tommy that she has inculcated in them, as she sees all parts of them, including their souls, as having been instrumental means to Hailsham's ends. Their souls functioned as transactional values for Miss Emily's humanitarian venture, used to prove, with qualitative and quantitative evidence, that they had souls, that they were human. The clones' lives, their bodies, and even their empathetic souls, are fungible in the market, subject to changing relations of force and value, and now they merely find themselves at the wrong "point of a process."[15] Ishiguro comments thereby on the scale of speculative capital in the management of life, namely how it is used to recognize value and the limits of the human. In this context, Ishiguro comments on the transformation of the affective values of humans—their interiority, their souls, and their empathy—into a kind of capital for humanitarian organizations.[16]

Kathy H., like all the other clones, lacks a surname, which not only marks the fact that she has been created in the shadows of Britain's welfare state, but also that she has been to denied the right to claim legal protections from any government whatever.[17] The clones experience a legal transformation of their bodies, becoming literalized biological machine-things. Their material body stands for everything, and yet its materiality does not provide a biopolitical membrane for protection, legally, ethically, or governmentally. The clones cannot evoke natural human rights—rights to which humans are entitled by the sheer fact of being human, as outlined in my chapters on human rights and humanitarianism—because they are seen juridically and socially as posthuman, as technohumans or things. Ishiguro thereby challenges historical Enlightenment notions of the autonomous individual, the recognition of bodily integrity, and the Kantian ideal (from *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*) of human dignity,[18] so central to global human rights claims, but he also challenges the idea of the posthuman as a subject to

come. Thrown into a position of knowing their future, but lacking adequate knowledge to truly understand it, the clones never flee the system of donation, despite having automobiles at their disposal. Because of gaps in their knowledge and because of their conception of themselves as things in circulation, they never run to another legal jurisdiction where perhaps they would be considered human. They accept their place in life and revere their Guardians, not unlike those looking aspirationally at the wealthy market humans, an attitude that has culminated in the United States with Donald Trump's election as president. The clones' character, their *bildung*, serves another utilitarian function: they actually exist and envision themselves instrumentally as agglomerations of autonomous objects, as assemblages of organs that are literally tools in the service of their vocation, as carers and donors of their organs. They obtain a measure of "dignity," and become most human, through "completing" their subjectivity, when donating their organs until death, at which point, perversely, they could actualize their rights as autonomous subjects—were they not already dead.

The scenario of *Never Let Me Go* highlights an important set of bioethical questions regarding the prolonging of life in our neoliberalist financial present in the United States. Why are certain forms of life both within and between nation-states viewed as more valuable than others? Why should those too poor to pay for healthcare in the United States' for-profit system sit before the altar of trickledown economics and be allowed to die, so that the tax burden on wealthy market humans remains light? Miss Emily's comments to the students about the desire of "natural" humans not to think about the reality of the clones in the shadows of an informal economy show how life is vivisected into shares through hierarchies:

> Suddenly there were all these new possibilities laid before us, all these ways to cure so many previously uncurable conditions. This was what the world noticed the most, wanted the most. And for a long time, people preferred to believe these organs appeared from nowhere, or at most that they grew in a kind of vacuum. Yes, there *were* arguments. But by the time people became concerned about . . . about *students*, by the time they came to consider just how you were reared, whether you should have been brought into existence at all, well by then it was too late. There was no way to reverse the process. How can you ask a world that has come to regard cancer as curable, how can you ask such a world to put away that cure, to go back to the dark days? There was no going back. (263; italics and ellipsis in original)

Here we can see mirrored what Catherine Waldby and Robert Mitchell describe as the "fantasy of the regenerative body" in the wealthy global North exploiting the seemingly expendable human matter of the impoverished global South.[19] There are "surplus" humans in the global South willing to sell their organs, the only assets they have, to improve their economic situation. Ishiguro seems to be commenting on what I discuss below as the altruism market's opportunities for improving or prolonging life through transplanted organs, blood supplies, and surrogacy services via neoliberal market choice in a global context. Ishiguro's speculative fiction displays a central argument of this book, namely that humans who view their humanity instrumentally expedite a world that readily slices them into shares, monetizing all the parts along the way. Through organ donations the poor can acquire wealth; like the clones in *Never Let Me Go*, they "complete" their subjectivity by banking on their organs and their empathy.

Bodies That Don't Matter

Lawyers David Matas and David Kilgour have documented the lucrative market for organs from freshly killed prisoners in China, who are prepped for organ extraction before their executions. Indeed, they describe a system whereby Falun Gong practitioners are jailed and routinely have their blood typed, so that when demand for a particular organ arises, the Chinese government can find quickly an appropriate prisoner from whom to have the organ extracted.[20] Newspaper accounts also document the harvesting of organs from Serb prisoners during the Kosovo War.[21] In Israel, the widespread impression that Jewish law prohibits organ donation keeps donation rates low, thus increasing the scarcity of organs for transplant, and a former chief pathologist of Israel has admitted that in the 1990s organs were harvested from newly dead Palestinians and others without the permission of their families.[22] Yet according to the human rights organization Organs Watch, fifteen to twenty thousand organs are sold illegally each year, suggesting that the sensationalism around such particular instances is overwrought, given the banality of these processes within neoliberalist capitalism.[23]

Medical anthropologist Nancy Scheper-Hughes has analyzed the global circulation of organs as both a licit and an illicit trade, one that exploits uneven development and the abundance of destitute, underemployed, and dispossessed but healthy persons who live in economically impoverished zones. The impoverished of Eastern European countries of the former Soviet bloc (Moldova and Romania), the Philippines, and India, and ex-

prisoners, AWOL soldiers, and aging prostitutes are the primary caste of donors. According to Scheper-Hughes, the donor's body is trafficked by organ brokers in Turkey, Israel, Italy, and Russia. The organ is extracted by often well-regarded transplant surgeons willing to circumvent international law, in organ transplantation centers around the world, from back-alley facilities in Kosovo to elite transplant centers in such place as New York City. Following the operations both donor and recipient return to their respective home countries, having completed their exchange. For Scheper-Hughes, these organ donations are the latest example of commodity fetishism, what she calls the "last frontier," and represent the loss of notions of the integrity and dignity of the human body. Her research has even been able to designate the relative value of organs on the donor side, demonstrating hierarchies of life for organs from wealthy nations within the global system. Circa 2005, a kidney could be purchased for $1,000 in India and for $1,300 in the Philippines; a Moldavan or Romanian kidney went for $2,700, while in Turkey the organ would cost $10,000, and as much as $30,000 in Peru or Brazil.[24]

Although exchanging money for organs from the living is illegal, this is often overlooked due to bioethical claims of the value of prolonging life. Altruistic systems of donation—which promote the donation of organs so that others may live, as an inherent good—and the instrumental logic of the neoliberal market—which promotes the donation of organs so that others may live, because of the laws of supply and demand—intersect in most organ harvesting accounts. Most organ donation programs are nationally organized and based on altruism underwritten by fundamental respect for bodily integrity and human dignity. They rely on human empathy, the willingness of donors within a nation-state to donate their organs for the benefit of fellow citizens. Nations in which religious beliefs or cultural practices sanctify bodily integrity suffer from a shortage of organs for transplant. Market forces cater to this pent-up demand by fostering transplant tourism, allowing those with money to circumvent scarcity or legal prohibitions at home. Some nations, through their national health services, even cover the costs of transplants secured abroad, as a way of pacifying wealthy elites.[25] The high cost of medical care in the United States due to its free-market healthcare system also encourages transplant tourism. Websites such as www.liver4you.org have promised to arrange transplant "packages" that cover airfare, hotel accommodations for accompanying family members, the organ, the surgeon, and the bribing of officials to look the other way for all the requisite visas, and they may even advertise that their services in arranging for a live organ donor will be less

costly than the medical bills for receiving a cadaver organ in the buyer's home country.[26] Furthermore, the increased demands of biotechnology and drug firms for both cadavers and organs has strengthened the market for organs from living donors, which are perceived by many of those in need of a transplant as fresher and more healthful than cadaver organs because they are less technologically altered and have not been taken from the brain dead or newly deceased. That paid transactions mean that one class of life (the monied) is allowed to thrive at the expense of another (those with no assets save bodily organs) is often treated as incidental, given the enormous benefits secured. Those who sell their organs are not unlike Ishiguro's caste of clones whose organs are harvested by the national health plan. The potential long-term effects on the organ donors are incidental to the calculation; they recede back into the shadows of the impoverished country whence they emerged. Much like the clones in *Never Let Me Go*, the indigent are valued by capital only for their organs. Those who sell their organs have become fungible forms of life, living warehouses of organs to be purchased by global elites, the market humans I discussed in chapter 1.

With the demand for transplants outstripping the supply of viable organs, the free market and rational choice theory adjudicate the measurement of life. U.S. insurance companies, for example, put the onus of finding the needed organ squarely on the recipient, and neither the doctor nor the medical center nor the insurance company will delve into the organ's provenance due to confidentiality laws. According to journalist Scott Carney, American companies such as medical travel service provider IndUShealth and the health insurer United Group Programs have set up partnerships with hospitals in India, Pakistan, and Egypt to arrange for organ transplantation, as a cost-saving mechanism for U.S. businesses as compared with using U.S. hospitals.[27] Outsourcing organ transplantation to such places as Aadil Hospital in Lahore, Pakistan makes perfect economic sense. Aadil charges $14,000 for the first transplant and $16,000 for a second, if the first one fails. In contrast, in 2008 actuaries at Milliman, a healthcare provider and actuarial in the United States, calculated the total cost of different organ transplants in the United States, and, writes Carney, "Including the real costs of procurement ($67,500 paid to the hospital to harvest a kidney), pre- and post-operative care, immunosuppressants, and hospital administration, a kidney cost $259,000. Livers go for $523,400; pancreases, for $275,000; and intestines for a whopping $1.2 million."[28] Indeed, for each body part a complicated calculus formalizes the true value added, computed by shopping for organs from economically deprived

areas. All parts of the procedure and life are monetized, including the organ in the futurally contracted donor, who waits to be called for his/her vivisection—much like Isiguro's clones.

Numerous scholars have critiqued the clash between altruism and markets, starting, most tellingly, with Richard Titmuss in his ethical probing of blood donation systems. His 1970 *The Gift Relationship* analyzed the gift-commodity system of organ donation. For Titmuss, the altruistic system of blood donation, based on the logic of the gift, the gift of life motivated by empathy with other humans, was preferable to the development of the blood supply through the free-market system, which had run rampant in the United States and had led to contamination problems. Titmuss's ethical system, however, assumes a national healthcare system, an active welfare state, and citizens empathizing with other citizens, premises that may have seemed entirely reasonable in 1970, but that are less so in our neoliberal present.[29] Even the United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS), the United States' national organ transplantation database used to link donors with recipients, is not run by the federal government, but is a private nonprofit; its setup is similar to the Hailsham partnership encountered in *Never Let Me Go*. With too few humans willing to donate their organs, the market steps in to create its own type of Ishiguroesque Exchanges.

Both the altruistic and free-market systems of organ donation traffic in empathy and converge around honoring individual rights of privacy for the dead or the living donor from whom an organ has been harvested, through confidentiality clauses. This anonymity, though motivated by bioethics, has facilitated the global trafficking in organs that Carney calls the "red market," the human reduced to flesh, or meat. Carney describes how anonymity has enabled the criminal economy of illegal organs, bone, eggs, blood, and hair, indicating a shift from the body as human to the body as meat. For Carney, an unbridled free market allows the poor to sell their eggs, kidneys, and blood, and encourages the kidnapping of children and the exploitation of what Catherine Waldby calls "clinical labor" (the participation of human guinea pigs during pharmaceutical drug testing for FDA approval), while altruistic systems of donation do not produce a sufficient supply of legally obtained organs. The impoverished fulfill the demand: "Though procurement is sometimes abhorrent, the final sale is often legal and usually sanctioned by the implicit moral dimension of saving lives. The crimes are covered up in a veil of altruistic ideas."[30] Anonymity clauses have been employed by market forces to depersonalize the donor, under the guise of protecting the privacy rights of the living and the

dead.[31] This depersonalization leads to a type of organ reification, as the body is reconfigured for legal purposes as monetized units of meat. Given that the identities of both the wealthy recipients and the donors are kept secret, organs appear to emerge from the shadows, like the organs from the clones in *Never Let Me Go*, but in our world they are bought and sold on the open market. The altruism market creates a reality in which organs can be virtually laundered, becoming merely another form of capital, avoiding state legalities and financial disclosure.

The altruism market, much like Hailsham and the clones, traffics in empathy. It locates black holes in international law. The way in which the provenance of organs is left in "the shadows" echoes remarkably the description Ishiguro's Miss Emily offers of attitudes toward clones before Hailsham and after the Morningdale scandal. Impoverished organ donors, much like the clones, "complete" their subjectivity through organ donation, gaining enough capital to live where work and money are scarce; hence, market advocates stridently argue that the poor benefit from this system of exchange, even if it is illegal, recasting the transactional reality as an example of the market's cornucopia of altruism.[32] In this view the destitute autonomously choose to donate, to "complete" their lives by going into back alleys for donations, or signing away their organs. Altruism and privacy collude to help the "natural" humans, the wealthy market humans, in our neoliberal present. Any discomfort with these mundane market activities, this trafficking in human flesh on the open market, is assuaged by the idea of saving lives, which provides an effective marketing strategy, while knowledge of the true situation is obscured through confidentiality clauses.

The body is easily objectified or reified as "meat," and, as Catherine Waldby and Robert Mitchell show, advances in biotechnology, immunosuppressants, and so forth have created a market for tissue divorced from the body and from human identity.[33] Paul Rabinow speaks of the "separable, exchangeable and reincorporable body parts" that are divorced from human identity.[34] I believe that what this shows is not merely commodity fetishism, as Scheper-Hughes sees it, but the biopolitical fungibility of reified life itself. As I discussed above with regard to use of the clones of *Never Let Me Go* to generate humanitarian revenue streams, the body is no longer seen as a barrier for monetization and markets, as notions of inside and outside have been colonized by capital to dissect the organism, reifying bodies and souls into flexible, calculable units for capital in altruism markets. The reification of some human bodies relies on an anthropocentric will to judge certain forms of human life as "demihuman," much like the clones in *Never Let Me Go*, and to judge others, such as market humans, as

rational actors with dignity, entitled to benefit from organ "donations" from those others. While Ishiguro portrays a rationalized state-run system for organ harvesting based on the production of humans denied legal personhood, the currently existing system that Scheper-Hughes, Carney, and Waldby and Mitchell diagnose is more cynically instrumental, if more flexible, decentered, and distributed. In this system, body parts and tissues have become fungible units of exchange, without the pretense of their attachment to beings with souls, for all parts of life are reified as value in circulation.

Both Ishiguro's novel and Waldby and Michell's discussion of tissue economies depict the body as rendered into a fragmented set of technical objects, as assets. To these assets are attached variable calculations of value and rates of exchange, a far cry from the enshrined transcendence of the human body imbued with dignity as the seat of the soul. Although the clones of *Never Let Me Go* show all the capacities for emotion, learning, empathy, apathy, boredom, and reflective and determinate judgment that one might expect as the result of their humanist education, they occupy the status of nonhuman other; they are merely networks of objects. Their bodies and souls are an agglomeration of values and they exist at a threshold between the material and speculative futural value. As the clones' subjectivity becomes actualized through "completion," their material frame as it were disaggregates. They are self-aware of their status as an accumulation of organs valued by others, and their non-useful parts, including their artwork after Hailsham closes, are merely junk or trash. In concluding this chapter I will address the horrors of reification of the human and gesture toward the need to think subjectivity differently, as modes of individuation, what I am calling the ahuman.

Conclusion

Each of the clones in *Never Let Me Go* pictures "dream futures" as a way to avoid reflecting on the intolerable idea of his or her untimely completion. Ruth's dream future is inspired by detritus found on the side of the road: an advertisement for a temp agency, which allows her to imagine herself as a middle- to upper-class office worker, a job worthy of Hailsham's "special," elite students. Ruth is psychically destroyed when she tries to track down her alleged "possible," the human from whom she was cloned, a worker at a travel agency, only to discover that the latter looks very different up close than from a distance. In her disappointment she reveals a potential truth about the clones' origins: "We all know it. We're modeled from *trash*. . . .

If you want to look for possibles, if you want to do it properly, then you look in the gutter. You look in rubbish bins. Look down the toilet, that's where you'll find where we all came from" (*Never*, 166). While Ruth is referring to her genetic donors and demonstrating how well she has been educated to respect the British class system, the clones do what all humans do in constructing their lives from what Thierry Bardini calls *junkware*, that is, from the detritus of the material world.[35] The clones must construct a temporal subjectivity, which constantly changes, from the morass of artifacts, objects, images, and concepts they encounter at the Exchanges and Sales, on TV, from books, and beyond. The clones' characters, personalities, and consciousness can only be copied from the throwaway objects, gestures, affects, and knowledge that bombard their affective sensorium. They live in a world of perpetual circulation, much like "us," who also construct our lives from discarded objects, fungible knowledge, circulating ideas and memes, and the seemingly endless stuff we consume, the mounds of waste from which we build our lives. The entire global consumer society is based on new markets established to replenish old ones through designed obsolescence of products or new monetizing mechanisms of capture. All the electronics, computers, cellphones, and other totems of the so-called Information Age allow for virtual connection through screens. They are designed to be used and replaced, with a less than two-year product cycle in mind. Workers, too, are hired with the understanding that unless they are unionized, they serve at will of the corporation and will eventually be laid off, fired, or retired for their failure to conquer old age. The bioengineers claim that genetically, humans are 98.5 percent "junk DNA," noncoding polymers; only 1.5 percent of our DNA carries out the protein synthesis creating the biological entity.[36] This causes Bardini to ask: Is junk perhaps our ontology? Is the body's "thingness" central to the construction of the human? As I have been discussing throughout this book, an intolerable idea emerges in a neoliberal society: Are humans ontologically junk, from their creation?

I think that Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* demonstrates that we are the clones; the clones are we. The clones of the novel demonstrate an unpleasant reality of the human as an assemblage of things, as tools for others. Their interior existence, their souls as products of the empathetic imagination, are themselves part of the clones' instrumental value as junk *in potentia*. And what about us, schooled in morality, ethics, and empathy as keys to fighting injustice, and altruism as the means to conquer the intolerable economic disparity that exists all around us? Ishiguro leaves outside the narration what will happen to what is left of the clones' bodies upon their

"completion." Will their no-longer-vital organs be harvested, or will the remains of their bodies, including nonfungible organs such as their brains, be thrown out, as so much medical waste? Waldby and Mitchell contend that even medical junk has value in the market, as exemplified by the discarded blood and tissue samples taken from one John Moore while he was undergoing treatment at the UCLA Medical Center. These cells became the central intellectual property question of *Moore v. Regents of the University of California.* The Supreme Court decided that the sample spleen cells taken from Moore were no longer his individual property, despite the purported sanctity of the body, but were owned by the University of California.[37] Organs and tissues are considered distinct from actual bodies, insofar as they cannot even begin to lay claim to legal protections; they lack individual property rights because they are parts, things, or fragments in circulation.[38] Consequently, it appears that bioethicists and cultural critics are holding on to the body as the limit of the human; it is the material entity onto which dignity can be projected, onto which we project our empathy, and through which we recognize common humanity through various subject positions, intersectional or not. We need to consider how the market takes the body and vivisects it, reifies it into junk meat, precisely to circumvent the Enlightenment tradition of legal protections. This is much akin to powerful state actors creating new legal designations, classifying surplus populations *internally displaced persons* instead of *refugees* to avoid humanitarian law. We must formulate strategies to resist corporeal reification, thinking processes rather than objects and things.

To address the fragmentation that is the rendering the human into thing, I have turned to Simondon's transindividuations, modes of individuation, Deleuze and Guattari's formulations on haecciety and literature and life, as well as language's molecular immanence as providing keys. Bruno Latour's *dingpolitik* and his speculative realist variation on the universe of bodies, things, and beings provide another attempt, like Simondon's, to think politics when humanist categories have been so thoroughly colonized by neoliberal capital. *Dingpolitiks* rethinks politics, notions of knowledge, and actors as anything that makes a difference (including nonhuman technical objects, nature, and so forth), so that commonalities might be created around what Latour calls "matters of concern."[39] He urges reimagining the concept of living and nonliving to include how to represent things so that the human-technological-nature nexus comes to the fore when assembling political, social, and even biological structures. Latour argues that "mediators," convergences of often disparate forces, establish what is real through the known world, and they intersect.[40] While much of this is fairly basic

intersectional politics, Latour adds a twist: Rather than speaking subjects, humans, objects, or animals, there are *actants*, who may be human, or not. The actants are part of a network of alliances and relations that produce material reality through their interactions, much as I have been discussing with ahumans through recourse to Simondon, Deleuze and Guattari, Foucault, Atwood, and Shteyngart. Latour does not ascribe to the actor or actant a primary quality or secondary quality, an *a priori* status, as they are one and the same, but demonstrates how every actant may itself be a mediator within several actants. Indeed, instead of the opposition between subjects and objects, there are mediators that manifest through their actions and relations. As I have been arguing, speculative fictions are one notion of mediators of existence for thinking adjacent to speculative capital's dominion.

The body as a self-possessed entity is challenged by the bioethical dilemmas Ishiguro presents by means of *Never Let Me Go*, and compounded by neoliberalist vivisection of the body for altruistic fungibility. Latour's actant at least recognizes that the boundary of the body no longer functions as the limit for claims of dignity and rights. The body has been rendered a thing in circulation, junk that may have value in *potentia*, and it thereby operates as relations and forces, including counterfactually transindividuated processes still becoming. In sum, the body is socially embedded and conceived transindividually, as networks opening and connecting to the artifacts of the world in creating worlds. Rather than being a thing to be reified, the relational agent in process could connect to other things and concepts to produce these new realities. The actant is a mode of ahuman individuation that provides a way to critique the instrumentalization of life in the reification of human and nonhuman life, while acknowledging that the human also encompasses technological inorganic elements.

Ishiguro's speculative fiction reminds us of the fragmented and dissected bodies before us that we ignore because we are striving to hold onto a world picture of human dignity trafficking in empathy and altruism. The current distribution of the sensible ironically does not recognize this argument, and thereby sees dignity and altruism merely along marketing lines. In the meantime the circulation of organs is expedited, while the demi–*homo sapiens*, conceived as living warehouses of fresh organs, are cast into the shadows. In this regard, are we all that different from Kathy, who at the end of the *Never Let Me Go* contemplates her loss and the waste around her?

> I lost Ruth, then I lost Tommy. . . .
>
> I was thinking about the rubbish, the flapping plastic in the branches, the shore-line of odd stuff caught along the fencing, and I

> half-closed my eyes and imagined this was the spot where everything I'd ever lost since my childhood had washed up, and I was now standing here in front of it, and if I wait long enough, a tiny figure would appear on the horizon across the field, and gradually get larger until I'd see it was Tommy, and he'd wave, maybe even call. The fantasy never got beyond that—I didn't let it. . . . I just waited a bit, then turned back to the car, to drive off to wherever it was I was supposed to be. (288)

Here Kathy suggests a fantasy of reclaiming the memories and fragments of existence, including the lost objects of her love, who have been dissected in time. Her words are a virtual invocation of Walter Benjamin's angel of history; the pieces of trash floating in the wind, piling up against tree and fence, "wreckage upon wreckage,"[41] to be held there for a moment, are like slices of her life, as these nonhuman forces push ever further. This recognition of her "thingness," of her self as waste in the process of becoming, is intolerable, and therefore she retreats from thinking it. Instead, she drives to her next obligation as a carer. She will soon begin the process of donation in her forward march toward completion. Are we "other humans" any different? Let us all get back to our own fantasies of wherever it is we are "supposed to be," and forget the catastrophe of bodies, organs, peoples in perpetual circulation, and the economic dispossession that piles up all around us, as well as the simultaneity of death that underwrites all existence. Let us hope that Kantian human dignity can be redeemed by extending it to objects and tissue fragments, to give them legal rights. Yet doing so puts aside the intolerable idea that the human and its soul have already been rendered into things, assets in circulation, by market forces beyond human understanding and control. And Ishiguro's shadowy clones are a reality that weighs like a nightmare on the living: the reification of humans as an assemblage of parts readied for capital valuation. Whither ahumans?

CONCLUSION

Ahumans: A Guide to Nonmarket Living

A market need no longer be run by the Invisible Hand,
but now could create itself—its own logic, momentum, style,
from *inside*. Putting the control inside was ratifying what de facto
had happened—that you had dispensed with God. But you had taken
on a greater, and more harmful, illusion. The illusion of control.
That A could do B. But that was false. Completely. No one can *do*.
Things only happen, A and B are unreal, are names for parts
that ought to be inseparable. . . .

—THOMAS PYNCHON, *Gravity's Rainbow*

Speculative capital is futurally directed, with the monetary means, the dominant monetarist policies, and the goals for enacting the future it wants to bring into existence. It is organized, it arranges politics and governmentality, and it industrializes thought to ensure that we continue asking the wrong questions about the present. Speculative capital's dominant current strategy is to make life as precarious as possible for the vast majority, to foreclose the possibility of envisioning a future other than the one already set in motion. To defy this colonization of the future, we need new strategies to enfigure what we have become and will become, and to counteract speculative capital's orientations. Over the course of this book, I have diagnosed how financial capital provides the resources to enact a shift from our having any sense of publics or collectivities, to seeing ourselves as mere atomized individuals who view risk as a categorical imperative, as morality itself. Neoliberalism provides the intellectual cover for this shift. This change in focus from public to private has dramatically affected concepts of humanity, and the diminishment of the human as a political category has a relationship with transformations in the modern nation-state. The nation-state is not withering away or declining; it is shifting its legitimation strategy

away from a sense of the commons or a public sphere, and is instead marshalling its taxpayers as assets for the market, as market subjects. These market subjects are armed with a much greater sense of personal or familial responsibility than of collective responsibility for the future, for the next generation, except as human capital. Neoliberalism promotes the outsourcing of governmental functions to private entities or to public-private partnerships, but redeploys the great resources of the state for private gain.[1]

Corporations have sovereign free-speech rights, yet those who work for them increasingly cannot even leave jobs due to nondisclosure agreements, which in effect tether them to current jobs while literally gagging their speech.[2] Private corporate and financial interests shift value from the many to the few, the market humans.

The human and human welfare are often not calculated as risk variables in this increasingly operationalized reality. As investment in technology over investment in humans has resulted in new mechanisms that render more and more workers redundant, algorithmic thinking based on past inputs and data projects a mechanistic and industrialized future through digital technologies, the ostensible hallmark of our postindustrialist and postemployment future. The transformation of the human leaves many, if not the majority, of humans unable to envision a future outside the one choreographed by financial capital and neoliberalism—that is, modes of being flexible, managing risk, and assuming debts and obligations in accordance with financial calculations. Resurgent populism demonstrates the great unrest currently gripping members of the species housed in Western democracies, who have been left drifting as standing reserve capital, while the safety nets of the welfare state have been downsized, seen as costs the nation-state cannot afford. As more and more people recognize that they no longer feel regarded as fully human, they have looked for ways to understand their reality and have grasped for nostalgic forms such as nationalism, essentialized identities such as can be seen in the white supremacy movement and in ethnic and religious identity politics, or branched out into creating virtual selves that exercise agency in virtual realms and offer an illusion of control.

Over the course of this book I have used the figuration of the ahuman as a shepherding of being other than the market's instrumentalization of existence. Drawing on the historical role of humanism as an alternative to theological absolutism and market formations and in galvanizing resistance among dispossessed populations, I reconsidered the human as a temporal trans-individuated figuration for collectivity when there is no transcendent position outside the neoliberal financial market. The concept of the human

that we currently inhabit and deploy, as well as its ostensible fellow traveler the posthuman, reifies life. Both humanism and posthumanism argue over the "true" or "authentic" form of life that can be subjugated as recognizable beings that will be able to redeem public life now collapsed into the market. Capital is not outside of power; it is the tool of a strategy that incorporates and deploys all entities, making it a challenging adversary. Consequently, we will need forms of agency that can think strategically, like capitalist forces do every day, in order to resist it. I close with several axioms for questioning the present reification of life and offer strategies for nonmarket living—a user's guide to living ahumanly that marks affinities and points of critique with new ecologies, disability studies, critical race theory, feminism, animal rights scholarship, advocates of materialism and realism, and object-oriented ontologists.

The state functions as an apparatus of capture, a way to shepherd force, to monopolize violence, but it is not imbued with an overarching or top-down power, a point that neoliberalism makes patently obvious as the state outsources its governance functions to market forces. As Foucault's analysis of the microphysics and capillaries of power demonstrates, the state is nothing but a "composite reality and a mythicized abstraction,"[3] a conglomeration of relations, and a mechanism for ordering force. Foucault therefore focused on governmentality, exploring the distinction between processes of governance and the disciplining of the body, the production of the modern soul and the technologies of the subject; ultimately weighing the modelling of the ontology of the present. Foucault's work on neoliberalism maps techniques of governance that shepherd and direct existence, and is useful in understanding neoliberalism's development of subjects of freedom, which so differs from the historical formation of citizens within the nation-state. The modern state gained legitimacy via the idea of a social contract, which committed the state to protecting its citizens in exchange for its powers of social control and organization. Thomas Hobbes argued that it was the citizens who gave the state its *raison d'être* as a "commonwealth," in addition to the state's well-known history as a mechanism of social control. Yet, while originally the state held a monopoly on discipline and surveillance, those functions have been increasingly outsourced to market and security forces, a process that, as Karl Polyani and World Systems theorists remind us, has operated within market economies since mercantilism.[4] The state and the market mutually presuppose each other, with one pole exercising greater power and force at specific moments in time. The outsourcing of state functions under neoliberalism is not a sign of the withering away of the state, but is merely the channeling of governmental resources for

techniques of control, security, and risk management, without the underlying premise of reciprocity offered by the social contract. In other words, there is state power without the reciprocity, the sense of a debt owed to citizens, that historically offered democratic legitimation of the state. Instead, there is a kind of transaction between agents and the market's promise, if not reality, of freedom. The transactional reality that emerges, the subject as enterprise, functions like a derivative, a contract or security whose value is intersectional relative to other assets and capital streams.[5] As a result, the subject of risk is a mode of being that resembles a structured debt, offering futural value and promising returns through greater speculative risk. In sum, financialization creates a transactional mode of existence that governmental and nongovernmental forces now reproduce, viewing all forms of life as possible assets to be shepherded. While critics focus on the centralized organizing power of the state, market forces consolidate their dispersed and centralizing distributive control by creating ever-larger transnational conglomerates that restructure social institutions and life itself. Banks, healthcare companies, insurance agencies, agribusinesses, nonprofit humanitarian organizations, and transnational corporations, as well as hospitals, prisons, paramilitaries, colleges, and nonprofits such as education management organizations (which I will address below) consolidate into more and more powerful if disaggregated mechanisms of control. As the market becomes the universal, we need to think about whether the historical formation of the state's monopoly on violence still persists, with the market exercising different types of epistemological violence along the biases of financial capital.

Beware of philanthropic and humanitarian organizations, for they offer not only inchoate altruistic mechanisms and institutions, but also new modes of neoliberal governmentality, while simultaneously appearing external to rapacious neoliberal market forces. I have shown with my analysis of humanitarian organizations and human rights and structures of humanitarian and war law how easily they have either been developed or captured by capital, and how they govern by other means, in place of the historical formation of the sovereign nation-state or idea of the welfare state. In the United States we have, I believe, a "nonprofit industrialization complex," which functions not only in dictating the realm of available political discourse and public and social policy, but in the restructuring of institutions in education, law, prison reform, and modes of taxation by powerful economic forces. For example, tax structure in the United States favors donations to nonprofits as a sign of disinterested altruism. These tax deductions benefit, nevertheless, the wealthiest sectors of the population (market humans, the one

percenters), who can alleviate their tax burden to the government while creating and funding the types of programs, ideologies, and ultimately institutions they want for lobbying and reorganizing societies and government, through diminished tax revenue. In fact, the wealthy who donate and create nonprofits spend considerable time capturing existing institutions and redirecting them along new corporate biases. While certainly not all nonprofits do harm or are merely fronts for monied interests, their nongovernmental status does not inoculate them from power, as they govern and exercise power in flexible or fluid ways, even while doing good. A key micropolitical task becomes mapping and critiquing the efflorescence of Ishiguroesque "Hail-shams," public-private synergies in our present altruism markets, to trace whether they live up to their marketing, for the latter has often supplanted the actions on the ground. At the same time, the multitudes without vast revenue streams still need to establish nonprofits to provide alternative arguments, data, and critique. At the moment of writing, critics of the educational reform movement such as Diane Ravitch, the Network for Public Education, and the Badass Teachers Association (BATS), in their fight against educational disruption in public education; UnKoch My Campus, which battles the influence of corporate donors on higher education; and the Hedge Clippers, a group committed to exposing how hedge funds and billionaires are remaking communities and democracy to enrich themselves, provide inspiring examples. In the wake of police violence and the perpetual killing of black people with impunity, Black Lives Matter provides another example, by creating a recent tear in the managed reality of institutional racism.

Post-Fordism does not indicate a movement beyond industrializing processes in the information and digital economies. Although the so-called knowledge economy ostensibly brings about the ascendance of immaterial labor and new potentials for living labor, the industrialization of consciousness and the formation of the subject or soul are themselves industrialized processes in the digital information present, *pace* Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri or Manuel Castells.[6] I have shown the operation of the industrialization of consciousness through critiques of market humans, utilitarian humanism, humanitarianism, and to a different degree, translation in international legal contexts. Furthermore, I have discussed in connection with Shteyngart and Atwood how information technologies capture attention and automate existence, to function like algorithmic processes that work, in turn, much like Ford's assembly line to standardize production. They are potentially more insidious in their soft yet mechanistic ways of modelling beings. Instead of tools at the service of the human or the human as tool,

with machinic processes the human is one element among many that is modelled or modulated, including human sensory, affective, and cognitive behavior, through protocols, algorithms, platforms, and techniques.

After Foucault and Gramsci, I call this modelling the Taylorism of the information/digital age. It industrializes consciousness and affect by determining the trajectories of thought, rational and irrational action, truth and falsity, useful attention, and ultimately the imaginative possibilities of existence, through the horizon of efficiency and the "useful" life, the life worth living. Ushering in the Efficiency Movement at the beginning of the twentieth century, Frederick Winslow Taylor believed engineering principles could be applied to all facets of existence to improve efficiency (not unlike Herbert Spencer, who did the same while developing the ideology of Social Darwinism). For Taylor, effective management and the application of scientifically proven models could remove waste and reverse power from the worker to the manager. Taylor was suspicious of workers, "trained gorillas" in his parlance, who were recalcitrant in adopting the efficiencies universalized by what he deemed "science" and "best practices." According to Simon Head, computer business systems employ the reservoirs of available real-time data to justify Taylor's principles in the twenty-first century. New time and motion studies optimize workers at Wal-Mart and Amazon to marshal items to customers at the greatest efficiency via perpetual surveillance and normalization of best practices, such as limiting bathroom breaks and peregrinations through the Amazon warehouse. Taylor's "best practices" have indeed been updated with available real-time data, the gathering of which, due to an unmitigated faith in data, becomes itself a normative best practice. Head identifies "expert systems that mimic human intelligence in performing the cognitive tasks that are integral to the business processes to be managed."[7] In other words, an industrial process of programmed and centralized rules, procedures, and protocols embedded in the system can be universally applied by machine or human. It does not matter which agent initiates or directs them. For example, HMOs use algorithms for adjudicating the best practices for all doctors before they can approve a procedure for a patient, to check whether it should be covered by insurance. This technique not only ignores the many specifics of the health of the individual seeking treatment, but also deprofessionalizes doctors' judgments in light of the centralized algorithmic "best practice." Given the for-profit nature of most health insurance companies, cost effectiveness becomes an important variable in the calculus, a none-too-subtle normalization of business practices adjudicating the limits of the life worth living.

Instead of producing Model Ts or steel ingots, or shipping Amazon products within a three-to-five-day window, computer business systems operate in contemporary education circles with cultures of assessment and standardized curricula in higher education, and in the promotion of standardized testing or teaching the Common Core in K-12 education in the United States. Head also discusses Britain's Research Excellence Framework (REF) in higher education, which quantifies each department's and college's research profile into a numerical rubric of success, even for the arts. Schools and departments compete for high numbers as marketing tools to attract prospective students, a model that seems to be coming to the United States in inchoate forms, with the spread of impact factors and cultures of assessment. Those institutions that fail to perform optimally receive less government or private funding and are thereby at a financial disadvantage to fund the research production by which they are measured. In the United States, the industrialization of educational processes allows for greater standardization and centralization of federal control in K-12 education through a culture of perpetual testing. At the same time, the standardization creates a flexible employment environment, where any individual can administer the predetermined testing system, while also fashioning compliant subjects who conceive education only as the successful completion of mechanisms of assessment.

As the assembly line replaced individual craftsmen, the artisan, and the apprenticeship system, computer business systems coupled with the dominance of algorithmic reasoning, efficiency as transcendent judgment, and a flexible and distributed digital network, can make more and more people redundant and thus expendable. Head shows that the professional classes of doctors, teachers, and medical staff are the "trained gorillas" of the new Taylorism within the era of big data.[8] What may have once required humans to judge, assess, collate, and execute can now be done by the algorithm's automated, centralized, and programmed judgment. At the same time, computer business systems invent formations of power and social subjection. Humans are points of connection or disconnection in the smooth operation of capital. In other words, business practices manufacture souls and industrialize consciousness and affect, in concert with or in place of the governing reason of the state. And as I have been arguing throughout this book, they follow the biases of financial capital.

Critical theory must reengage institutional critique as a practice of everyday life. Here's an example that may demonstrate why: With the privatization of public education, education is monetized for its possibilities of lucrative revenue generation for investors, who disrupt various professional sectors

in order to make money from them. Institutions continue to exist. Some have died, but the majority have been captured and transformed in order to recreate society. I have outlined the importance of continuing to theorize and think institutions as they are transforming within neoliberalism. They still hold quite a bit of weight in the dispensing of living beings, human and nonhuman. As I have shown, the not-for-profit sector and philanthropic and humanitarian formations subdue life under the aegis of the *homo oeconomicus* that produces market subjects as the being of beings. All other forms of life are relegated to expendable status, including most humans, because their existence is not recognized by the universal market human. Or they are treated as posthumans or nonhumans by the all-too-human institutions of human rights and humanitarian law and the laws of war. In the speculative fictions of Shteyngart, Atwood, and Ishiguro we see this logic carried to its most chilling ends.

Public education in the United States provides a tellingly ironic example, a "humanizing" through privatization guided by best practices and benchmarks of efficiency to reorganize the social order. In the quest for new markets after the 2008 economic crises, speculative capital sought less risky market avenues for profit ventures by cannibalizing infrastructures in which governments had already intervened and done most of the heavy work, such as education. As a result, investment from hedge funds and equity firms has gravitated into public education, most directly in the reorganization of K-12 in impoverished and low-performing school districts. Investors benefit through an institutionalized creative destruction by underresourced and withering welfare states. Yet speculative capital also lobbies governments to outsource their own functions to hedge funds and equity firms, who then profit from the public-private alliances, generating and then fulfilling the virtuous circle of the market. How? The Department of Education cannot actively create national policies and standards, or it risks being charged with federal overreach and violation of the Interstate Commerce Clause; instead, it creates partnerships with powerful foundations that can advocate at a distance. As Diane Ravitch has shown, three foundations, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Eli Broad Foundation, and the Walton Family Foundation (established by the founder of Wal-Mart) generate most of the grants for education reform.[9] Indeed, nonprofit foundations have actually fabricated policy documents, data, and nonprofit institutions to promote the culture of charter schools, the Common Core, Teach for America, competency-based education, and the privatization of educational goods and services that we currently witness. For a recent example, both the Gates and Walton foundations sponsored

"Bonds and Blackboards: Investing in Charter Schools," a day-long workshop at the Harvard Club on how to create private-public partnerships and profit in the altruism market.[10] Furthermore, the signature educational policy program of the Obama administration, the "Race to the Top," was in fact initially created by the Gates Foundation. The three big foundations, as nonprofits who support other nonprofits, are perceived as lacking any type of agenda, and yet they all advocate for remaking education along business instrumentalities, bringing educational disruption and creating nonunion workforces.

Transforming education from a public resource into a private one is a typical form of corporate welfare, enabling speculative capital to make money from guaranteed clients, nation-states, and the millions of individual consumers of educational services. Hedge funds and equity firms profit by investing in and/or purchasing Educational Management Organizations (EMOs) and Charter Management Organizations (CMOs). These are corporate entities that manage individual charter schools or chains of charter schools that in fact they have already created and are running; but now the management organization wing of the charter school charges a management fee for doing so. In other words, they charge for services they had already been supplying, but public funds go to the management organization wing of the company to pay management costs, instead of going to the charter school teachers. Hedge funds and equity firms also profit from investing directly in the public-private ventures of charter schools and the various goods and services that emerge with the reorganization/disruption of education. Indeed, the new educational policies generate a slew of educational businesses that produce test preparation products, standardized tests, and textbooks, and generate the technologies and software that must be purchased by traditional public schools and charter schools alike in order to ensure that students can take the tests. Hedge funds and equity firms also build or rent space for charter schools, or create synergies for building developers and urban planners by providing the means to gentrify neighborhoods.[11]

Moreover, for every dollar of investment in charter schools or educational services, hedge funds and equity firms can take a tax write-off for philanthropic donations, so altruism does pay dividends, most directly with their philanthropic lobbying wings. The virtuous circle is complete: by creating philanthropic nonprofit advocacy groups such as Democrats for Education Reform, the investors can lobby or donate to politicians to persuade them to vote for the appropriation of public money to purchase the charter school products in which they invest, while taking tax deductions

for these advocacy groups and for nonpolitical donations.[12] Finally, educational workers are one of the last strongholds of unionism. Killing labor unions and extirpating teacher tenure—one of the last bastions of job security in the United States—shifts the balance of power from teachers to a top-down mechanism led by administrators, an added benefit.

While there has been ample critique of the centralizing discourses of states, of the Anthropocene, of subjectivity, universal identities, and cultural formations in championing hybridity or mixed identities, datacentrism has not borne the same scrutiny. Indeed, epistemological violence in the information/digital era of big data may generate policies that lead to as much human suffering over a long period of time as a war, invasion, or terrorist attack. The possibilities are well illustrated through a work by David Eggers, a writer of both fictional and nonfictional works. Eggers wrote the speculative fiction *The Circle* to diagnose a society based on total transparency of knowledge, history, and life itself via the corporate consolidation and ownership of big data. His text reworks Orwell's *1984*, with Big Brother no longer a militaristic government that promotes fear, but a totalitarian Silicon Valley corporation called The Circle that forces participation and online connectedness. Eggers' mythical Circle seems like Google, Facebook, Amazon, Tumblr, and Twitter, underwritten by the Silicon Valley ethos of the sharing economy, all rolled into one. The company promotes informational transparency, emblematized by its corporate motto, "ALL THAT HAPPENS MUST BE KNOWN," and enabled through its services. The Circle becomes so powerful that it reorganizes society in its own image ("completing the circle," in its corporate lingo), claiming, in an echo of *1984*, that "secrets are lies, sharing is caring, and privacy is theft." As a result, The Circle promotes Habermasian universal transparency and communication, perpetual and compulsory participation in data feeds, compulsory survey feedbacks for corporations, and compulsory democracy through "Demoxie." In Demoxie, all voter registration and actual voting on all governmental issues is done through a "TruYou" account, a parody of a Facebook or Google account, which allows one convenient platform to sign into many different political, shopping, and social communities. In the process, by making voting and shopping different modes of the same plane of transactional reality, the Circle normalizes the political and economic as merely local variations of the continuum of economic ontology. Moreover, all major political decisions, on such possible issues as drone strikes, targeted assassinations, or sending the police out to mow down protestors, are rendered as real-time surveys from an uninformed public. These snap-judgment decisions are enacted. Furthermore, all of

this "shared" information is owned by the company and warehoused on its cloud servers, ripe for selling to other companies, or to be used for its own needs—in the event, for example, that the federal government were planning to regulate gargantuan monopolies such as the Circle. The Circle also ranks everything—in this it is akin to Shtyengart's dystopia—and universalizes a collective modulation through perpetual assessment and reform. Armed with an inclusive democratic language of transparency for all, the company creates or buys start-ups using the discourse of freedom, empowerment, transparency, and emancipation to rework virtually every sector of society, from education, politics, leisure, prisons, criminal justice, even historical knowledge. The company provides a workplace model and governance structure that is universalized in the story, "empowering" employees to stay at work 24/7 while owning virtually all of their time, attention, and thought, even their unconscious thoughts, by tracking their searches.

Eggers' text comments on digital and information technologies' perpetual surveillance and monetization of all sorts of human interaction—eyes on web pages for ad revenue, personal pictures, consumption patterns—which generate existence along the prejudices and orientations of the company's platform, not unlike what Head discusses with computer business systems. Users are given the illusion of choice while their affective and viewing labor (the basis of the attention economy) becomes monetized, without their receiving any compensation. Humans become products. In other words, Eggers' Circle allows users the "freedom" to employ its platforms, applications, technologies, and search engines, but for this privilege the company owns all the data that is generated from their use. This includes knowledge of the user's every search, every purchased item, every application and website visited, every social communiqué, photo, word, and every idea that has been stored on its platforms. Ideas are "shared," and private property is theft—except, of course, the intellectual property and business strategies of the company, which it zealously protects.

Eggers's *The Circle* comments on how information technology companies make profits less from the selling of material goods to people than the delivery of free services that they monetize through the leveraging of information they are able to gather and sell. In sum, they monetize the speculative promise of the vast amounts of data they accumulate and hoard on humans and leverage this to exercise power and generate more capital. Consequently, knowledge and material services, computer business systems, and performance management software within the digital age privilege data itself at the expense of material physical products as safe ventures

for financial speculation. Data is thus central to their well-being, becoming an end in itself, and they seek to universalize its gathering as an ethos.[13]

Moreover, over the course of the novel, disconnecting from the digital universe becomes impossible. In one sequence of events, the main character Mae uses her ex-boyfriend, Mercer, as a marketing strategy for a new product called "SoulSearch," which is ostensibly designed to locate criminals, but is technically capable of locating anyone. Mercer has been trying to live off the digital grid but is found in under twenty minutes by use of the cameras the Circle has planted all over the country, called SeeChange, and by drawing on Mae's millions of digital followers. Mercer is relentlessly pursued by a group of Mae's virtual friends by drones, via networks of cameras, and by actual people running or driving after him. Realizing that there is no "outside" to the digital universal, Mercer chooses death over the completion of the Circle. The Circle, much like Google and Facebook, represents a type of what Douglas Rushkoff calls *digital industrialism*.[14] These companies are big enough to buy all small competitors, and therefore can encompass the newest Silicon Valley start-ups and monetize the technology they are developing and the data they can acquire; or the purchaser can use the information to quash competitors and critics alike. The goal is increased monopoly that extinguishes all alternatives.

Eggers' text embodies another powerful critical element of speculative fiction: its ability to comment on such real-world companies as Google, Facebook, and Amazon with plausible deniability, thus avoiding receipt of a cease-and-desist letter from such companies as they try to preserve their brands. Yet Eggers also predicts the logical outcome when techno-utopianism meets market humans, the humanitarian and philanthropic impulse, and the consolidation and organization of society around data. He also shows the production of new types of agencies, processes of subjectification and subjectivation that capital produces, as it becomes almost impossible to step outside the Circle's power of data subjection. . . .

Beware of how neoliberalism has constructed our contemporary culture; financial capital reorganizes the order of knowledge along its biases, and humans begin to conceive themselves as things in circulation—assets, skills, derivatives, inputs, vivisected shares or parts—and thereby as posthuman. This book has focused on how the neoliberal financial markets dominate our present, as a centralizing figuration encompassing statist and nonstatist governmental processes that embody economic ontology, the shepherding of being for economic instrumentalities. To that end, I have stressed that neoliberalism is a dynamic set of economic systems, political rationalities (including human rights, humanitarian/war law), cultural and subject-producing

machines, and semiotic systems. It has ultimately become through its common sense the transcendent arbiter of the life worth living. As I have described over the course of the book with respect to subjectivity, culture, human rights, humanitarianism, games, bodies, and language, the market under neoliberalism captures and redirects life at speeds and scales that often defy the human ability to conceptualize and represent them. Neoliberalism organizes the order of knowledge (the episteme) and the aesthetics of existence that police being, and thus adjudicates the regimes of truth and falsity, consensus and difference, rationality and irrationality, affect and emotion, and reality and imagination. Furthermore, neoliberalism has reconfigured governance, where it acts as readily as states to engender the types of subjects it needs for its perpetuation and extension, while controlling the limits thereof. I have shown how the neoliberal market produces its others, who are still within the market even if not integrated or able to obtain the freedom it eternally promises. They are a standing reserve of potential speculative value that may be tapped or dispensed with, even if they are currently far removed from any society or formation of power. The market has no need for humans as individual, distinct entities (except of course market humans), but does use humans (though increasingly shying away from actual employment) as fragmented modes of value: vivisected shares, fields of energy, and body parts, from donated organs to eyeballs on web pages. The market also needs useful inventors of concepts and practices for monetization, but then can also readily dispense with them once they are no longer value-adding.

Posthuman scholars have identified and lambasted the anthropocentric universal subject and the anthropocentric gaze, while conferring greater status on animals and things. Yet they have not exercised sufficient care in their metaphysics of objects and machines when thinking the techniques of power for enframing life. Even in critiques of subjectivism, the human still remains central, regardless of its posthuman status. For example, I write these words in a symbolic system (the English language) that currently is the primary vehicle for both forms of expression and forms of content for other beings within the species through global English, a market language.[15] Until telepathic communication is possible and we can think, feel, and interact with nonhuman forms—as Margaret Atwood has imagined, with the transgenic pigoons—every act of human language is a reassertion of anthropocentric perception. Railing at anthropocentrism as a political project can be, therefore, as hermetic as the anthropocentrism being critiqued.

To recuperate the human from its humanist legacy of violence against dispossessed populations in colonial contexts, I have argued for thinking

the human not as a universal subject, but as dynamic processes within time that perpetually transform through interactions with other objects, beings, discourses, and technologies. There are two major epistemological issues with the terminology of posthumanism with which I take issue. First, the term *posthuman* tacitly suggests a "beyond" of the human, which is not helpful for thinking either the specific historical conditions of the human or the condition of capital, which, as I have argued, currently has no beyond (if it ever did). Second, posthumanism embodies an unrecognized belief in the idea of progress and moving forward, despite its own arguments to the contrary. Why have a *post* anything, when historical forces affect and often determine the intelligible in the present? Consequently, I think historical categories of the posthuman are unhelpful, except to mark the history of the most privileged sectors of the world. Indeed, dispensing with humanism and the human is a privilege that the majority of the species cannot afford. Are we going to dismiss indigenous movements against oppression because they hold onto ideas of humanism that have fallen out of favor after post-structuralism? Historical Universal Humanism has its many flaws and failures, and indeed has had few proponents in humanities departments in the last forty years, even though its premises organize most contemporary post-Enlightenment institutions, and have provided some legal protections, as I outlined in my arguments about natural rights.

The human is not a completed epistemological project, but an aesthetic question. The center or the circles have not held. Posthumanism, while theoretically acknowledging this concern, generates a post-figuration that frustrates considering humans as historical figures that are perpetually created within the dynamics of time. Posthumanism distinctly acknowledges that the human changes, but then seems to mark again and again the relationship of the posthuman to the humanist organization of knowledge, despite the latter's capture and reconfiguration by neoliberalism and financial capital. As a result, posthumanism often treats Enlightenment ideas of subjectivity as the central problem of current reality, despite modernity's own transformation and its own critiques thereof. Doesn't this historicism count against the ostensibly new ways of thinking time and agency so often celebrated by the "new" dispensation, which still defines itself by means of the old it is claiming to supersede? As a corollary, why do we not call medieval forms of existence before humanism and the production of modern individual subjectivity the *prehuman*? Isn't reality messier than that, and have we mistaken heuristic tools of epistemological breaks and so forth for the reality itself? Have we not already lived through these types of arguments with regard to how capital and technology changed the

human, with the advent of the *postmodern*, itself a term devised to weigh how financialization was beginning to affect the subject, and yet most concerned with the technological effects of televisual media on the human subject? Consequently, in the act of defining the agent produced by financialization, we have neglected to think financialization's actual effects on reality and the human.

In addition, those who advocate the posthuman subject to come, or the universe of autonomous objects, are limited by two problems on which they focus. They see multiplicity or intersectional identities as ends in themselves. I have argued that capital also works that way, and always looks for ways to capture and market inchoate forms of existence and resistance. One need only consider the marketing of identity after the Women's March to see how Silicon Valley companies got in on the action, as a tell-tale sign, or weigh all the Twitter revolutions that ostensibly removed despots, but didn't. Did they emancipate more humans—or lead to dramatic increases in Twitter's overvaluation when it went public? Secondly, posthumanism spends so much energy critiquing the foibles of the human that that is where its politics begins and ends. Shifting from subjectivity and subjectivism as a politics must consider the relationship of that politics to capital. The subject, even the posthuman subject, is not outside the circuits of capital; in fact, as I have argued, the posthuman, like the human, is *created* by financial capital. Furthermore, most scholars in the humanities view themselves as humanists and engage with theory, and are turned off viscerally by the idea of the posthuman, particularly as we witness the downsizing of humanities departments for their inability to foster immediate wealth creation. While I have enormous respect for many self-identified posthumanists, "posthumanities" as a slogan for organizing thought seems curiously short sighted amid the very real, present possibility of a posthumanities era, due to the reorganization of colleges along market instrumentalities.

Life and existence are intensities of freedom that are everywhere organized and contained by neoliberal financial power in order to establish an automated economic existence encompassing even the conceptual categories we employ. Capital is a subject-producing machinery that entombs life within the financial and neoliberal categories I have diagnosed throughout this book. I have mapped the need for conceptual strategies to struggle with market forces in between moments of freedom and colonization, to think life as ahuman, as conduits between biological, technological, social, and epistemological forms that reinvent themselves and are reinvented at every moment through their interaction. The human is, via perpetual interaction with what envelops and modifies it at a given moment, ahuman

among many forms of life. I have diagrammed in this book how the human functions as a personification of agency, and simultaneously as a subject that stands in for complex pre-representational forms—what Simondon calls individuation, and Deleuze and Guattari, micropolitical forces—and as an institution for the species, offering the promise, if rarely the reality, of protections from power, such as human rights. Ahumans are concatenations of individuations that immanently come together through their interaction and create several simultaneous possibilities for actualization within the flux of life. My goal in describing the ahuman is not to establish an organized politics, an ahuman politics, but to delineate the complexity of any being, any form of life, in which politics emerges and organizes itself. As there is no pure space external to the machinations of money, transactionality, and translation, and because we need to think strategic relations of power, including how we think of agency imbricated affectively within power, we need notions of agency that do not anticipate a pure space outside or beyond the human or the market and that do not celebrate a futural emancipatory subject. This then allows us to think of politics alongside the mechanisms and measurement and calculation that dominate due to big data and financial capital. By diagramming existence to indicate its contingency, mutability, and dynamic possibilities for change, I highlight instead situational elements as the catalyst for the emergence of immanent political possibilities. As a result, I am arguing for a historically grounded political aesthetics.

Speculative capital dictates increasingly the possibilities of reality and tries to limit the future except as economic ontology. However, it has a terrible historical record for actually predicting the future. It limits speculation to short-term returns on investment, prediction of risk, or the leveraging of assets and debt within a complex portfolio, and it is prone to perpetual crises. Whereas speculative capital is prone to crises and thrives on crises for reordering the world along its own financial lines, speculative fictions offer another way of thinking the world without immediate instrumental economic value. Instead, they model possible worlds for speculation as invention.

Speculative capital models the world in order to consolidate it, to monopolize it as a series of assets or debts within a portfolio of risk. To make life more manageable and predictable it has benefited from industrializing thought, affect, and capacities, by reorganizing the intelligible and unintelligible world through risk management categories, a topic I have discussed above at length. Speculative capital connects to the world by consolidating it into the risk analytics it creates, formalizes, and policies. It models the world so that we lose the capacity for changing it, and breeds a

generalized nihilism, based on ensuring that because we risk everything by going against it, we stay locked into its distribution of the sensible. Speculative capital generates itself as connection through consolidation, while speculative fictions take speculation as a different mode of seeing by multiplying images of thought.

I have delved into speculative fictions as situational envisioning at a slower pace, anticipating possible future scenarios and putting them into figuration, as means to counter speculative capital's colonization of the future. Speculative fictions combat the reification of thought and language daily experienced with communication, digital technologies, and the increasingly impoverished status of discourse, debate, and knowledge in light of big data and 24/7 distributed technologies such as social media. Speculative fictions provide the figurative strategies and tactics to reenvision the world in accord with Oscar Wilde's dictum that "all art is quite useless," and may allow readers, for a moment, to eschew reification, and thereby practice ahuman processes. These aesthetic processes act by perpetually inventing existence and creating alternative images of thought, by seeing language as a material practice, not a purely representational one. Moreover, they foreground the fictional technologies of expression that currently inhabit and colonize our existence, including speculative capital and/or efficiency as transcendental arbiters of the life worth living. Speculative fictions also document the contingent nature of the normative fictions that colonize existence, such as the daily assault of financial capital's speculative fictions, exemplified by spectacular crises that generate globalized states of abjection, on which speculative capital actually thrives.[16]

Speculative literatures can enact micropolitical possibilities by initiating alternative images of thought, practices, and forms of existence within the choreographed, reified ontologies of the present, including through remaking language. They force us to rethink what Guattari identifies as language's "existential" quality, the way language does not just describe but simultaneously invents existence. I outlined this premise in relation to the vagaries of translation in international legal contexts, and I consider it a political aesthetic by other means than the usual figurations of representational democracy. Speculative fictions such as Margaret Atwood's MaddAddam trilogy engage the bioengineering of life through games and sociobiology and enact ethical-political interrogations of the market's monetization and industrialization of life. To move beyond thinking humanist failures, I reconsidered, with Kazuo Ishiguro, the status of the body in our neoliberal financial moment as a field of vivisected shares, and indicated the failures of current bioethical narratives based on humanist dignity and

Kantian ethics. I argued, in concert with Ishiguro, for the need to shift focus from the body to individuations, fields of interacting force, ahumans within life. Although my focus there was on organ donation, the same matters of the body arise with the monetization of the digital attention economy (eyeballs on web pages, data sets supplanting human and nonhuman practices, humans as producers of data more valuable than the humans themselves) for capturing life, as I discussed in connection with Shteyngart's *Super Sad True Love Story*. I also analyzed the monetization of the disaggregated or vivisected body through the normalization of human surrogacy services within what Scott Carney has called the "red market," and the colonization of affective values of culture and memory by utilitarian humanism.

Ahuman agency is a contingent aesthetic form that transforms as the relations of force change, like a Nietzschean mask that is worn and discarded, Deleuzean "haecceity," Latour's "actant," or what Foucault calls "subjectivation." Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari describe the creation of concepts as nonhierarchical immanent actions that diagram how all reason is "contingent reason."[17] For Deleuze and Guattari, "thinking through figures" is "essentially paradigmatic, projective, hierarchical, and referential," indicating an object or figure of reflection against which to measure practices that can be transcendent. This is not to say that one gets rid of figures; instead, "thinking takes place on a plane of immanence that can be populated by figures as much as concepts."[18] They describe the interaction and connections of affect, sensations, precepts, and production of figures and concepts as the existential feature of thought to move from the virtual to the actual and vice versa: "to invent modes of existence or possibilities of life" (*What Is Philosophy?* 72). Their ontology of life is an aesthetic project of "*thought-events*" (ibid., 70) emblematized by "conceptual personae," figures that do not direct knowledge per se, as would a subject or philosopher-king, but create and connect, and are maps of thought's movements: "*The role of the conceptual personae is to show thought's territories, its absolute deterritorializations, and reterritorializations*. Conceptual personae are thinkers, solely thinkers, and their personalized features are closely linked to the diagrammatic features of thought and the intensive features of concepts. A particular conceptual persona, who perhaps did not exist before us, thinks in us" (ibid., 69). The conceptual personae is an ahuman, contingent, intensive figuration of affects, sensations, and thoughts formulated by the species in time in relationship to other forms of life, including animals, technology, and objects. It is not a subject with a centralized consciousness. It is why the human is a creature distinguished for its capacities to enfigure reality,

for possibilities of freedom and enslavement—the figurating animal. By describing the "intensive features of thought," the conceptual personae emerges not through human mastery per se, but through the irruption of an affective connection that could already reside in us and, it may be, "thinks in us," while diagramming these movements as occasions for events of thought.[19] How does this dance of figuration as production of concepts erupt in light of how representation captures thought and experience and channels it into habitual ways of thinking? By focusing on the affective and perceptual enunciation of language, on speculative fictions, and on the possibility of inventing new concepts and thereby new aesthetic figurations of the world. And "so it goes" (Kurt Vonnegut) . . .

I have shown in earlier chapters that Enlightenment thinking still organizes our present, as seen in humanitarianism, in the idea of human rights, and, more generally, in concepts of the state, and it will continue to do so, leading us into lockstep on political forms of agency through the subject. We must weigh how it operates in the present to limit new forms of politicization. Let us consider the residual and the emergent in every event, every expression of agency, every creation of concepts and figuration of action, the conceptual personae, the transindividuated being, the ahuman.

So what is left as politics in light of my discussion of these seemingly abstract, individuating forces of enunciation? Wendy Brown has offered one of the most devastating and thorough critiques of neoliberalism by arguing for reenergizing the *homo politicus*, which she sees as having coexisted since Aristotle with the life of *homo oeconomicus* as wealth generation. She discusses how *homo politicus* provides another order of knowledge, reason, judgment, and action that is oppositional to the global encapture of existence by neoliberalism, and offers democracy as the occasion for politics and the idea of a commons or public. This "other" political human assumes, nevertheless, the possibility of a subject of knowledge external to neoliberalism that would somehow resist cooptation. I have been arguing here, as does Brown, ironically, throughout her text, that neoliberalism's total annihilation of an outside to its reproductive, flexible, and dynamic governance, political rationality as management, and perpetual capture of all difference, makes such a prospect hard to envision.[20] Indeed, Silicon Valley's discourses of empowerment and the sharing economy represent one example of how *homo politicus* in fact normalizes the practice of democracy as another market concern, as critiqued in Eggers's *The Circle* with the idea of Demoxie. I have documented, furthermore, how neoliberalism and financialization leave the human adrift as so much flotsam and jetsam

within the wake of their reorganization of life. But this drift need not necessarily be considered a state of total abjection. Indeed, ahuman invention and action that speaks through us provides the machinery to avoid drowning in this seemingly totalizing system of capital games. Speculative fictions diagram how literature matters and is itself a dynamic form of matter, one that draws attention to the movement between actual and virtual worlds, and foregrounds the aesthetics of existence. And they provide strategies for thinking the possibilities of inchoate political formations, instead of a *homo politicus*. What do transindividuated ahuman political possibilities look like?

The human can still be an intersectional figuration for mobilizing political energies; it provides a historical context of collective differences of being at every moment, and has provided the means to mobilize current institutions to protect dispossessed populations. I explored in chapter 5 how natural rights arguments have occasioned possibilities of freedom for humans, allowing the dispossessed eventually to become political agents. But I have also noted how effective capital has been in taking existing notions of humanity and reorienting them into products for datamining, creating a generalized human as subject/object, a process that we must combat. We need strategies of agency that acknowledge the limits of the human, but also embrace its ability to create collective enunciations of people, "conceptual personae," for temporal resistance before it is captured. The political Right already realizes these techniques and has been successful in seizing institutions (including the welfare state) and the possibilities of political discourse itself, and redirecting them for conservative purposes. Evangelical Christians, while small in numbers, have circumscribed the possibilities for women's reproductive health in the United States, and have basically succeeded in limiting government funding in support of it, despite the fact that women are a democratic majority. Evangelical Christians seems to understand the critical function of politics as strategy rather than as an expression of a transcendent morality. This is how they have been able to reconcile their moral belief system with support for Donald Trump as a pro-life beacon, despite his history of being pro-choice, his multiple divorces, and his pattern of licentiousness, including bragging about sexually assaulting women. For another example, despites its small numbers, the Tea Party has effectively seized the narrative of the historical frontier and of personal responsibility, while increasingly shifting the focus of national discourse from public welfare to individual worth—for how else do they define personal responsibility than as ability to pay debts? The Tea Party has established a libertarian-neoliberal

regime of truth to further eviscerate the government, which has become the dominant mantra of the Republican Party, to the point where it now struggles to govern despite monopolizing all the major branches of government.

I will end with two separate examples that may help us think how collective enunciations begin movements. These movements then need to organize by seizing existing institutions and redirecting them for grassroots purposes, or by creating a new figuration for a people or collectivity that is still in the process of emerging or constituting itself. The election of Donald Trump is an event that has mobilized people in the United States to act and begin the creation of an inchoate political aesthetic, marked by the Women's March on Washington, echoed by hundreds of such marches globally, and by the rush of people to various U.S. airports to protest Trump's executive orders unilaterally barring legitimate refugees from entering the United States and limiting immigration. The Women's March was the eruption of a disaggregated form of agency that used digital platforms beyond their datamining purposes, to bring together collectivities of over 3 million people, albeit for a brief moment in time. Whether such collective organizing can be continued is an open question, and yet the agency that impelled the March continues to energize a series of loosely organized actions emerging from the grassroots level. The Women's March was a symbolic enunciation of power; it enfigured a people spread out over many cities occupying streets and spaces, and while peaceful, resisted even the organizers in Washington.[21] This was an event mobilized by affect, a generalized sense of injustice and disgust because Trump, who mocks the disabled, brags about sexually assaulting women, and won the election despite having no knowledge or expertise in governing and limited success in real-estate development, was installed in office. He embodied entrenched patriarchal power, financial power, heteronormative power, and institutional white supremacy. Elections are ironically disempowering forms of politics, and yet they channel resources, attention, and capacities for rethinking the future. Trump's election symbolized the feeling of many that they are more the tools and implements of others than they are agents of their own lives. People needed, therefore, to affectively act, which is why those at the Women's March on Washington tired of the inspirational speeches and just started marching. The sheer volume of people at the Marches symbolically enfigured power waiting to be unleashed, a sea of bodies that literally filled the horizon. This was an encounter with existence, rather than the digital freedom organized and ultimately controlled by virtual communities, communication, or platforms. While the Marches could be discounted as a catharsis for privileged sectors of the population

that channeled and then dissipated these affective energies of revolt, the shift in collective enunciations about feminism, women's health concerns, and sexual harassment are nothing to disavow. Is this rupture akin to the ability of Occupy Wall Street to put class and inequality into public discourse?

Similarly, people just needed to go to the airports to protest the treatment of other members of their species as things to be discarded or circulated. The figuration of action, the conceptual personae, of people collectively united to defend the idea of human difference against real state policing power and the policing of the distribution of the sensible. These were spontaneous events spurred by emotional outrage and disgust, affective relations in search of a means to act, to live. Given the general consensual reality we inhabit, why did these minor ruptures happen now? Were they expressions of people's intuition, their feeling insecure, dispossessed, like things, even those who have enormous privilege in their everyday life? Does it also show that movements are less defined by their labels and descriptions—the Women's March, the people who went to the airport, than by their actions? I want to end by highlighting how the ahuman could function as a conceptual personae of "thought-events," not as an epistemological category, but as political aesthetic strategies, figures to map emerging peoples and collectivities. And our ever-fleeting existence offers the potential to remember again, or create, the immanent possibilities of freedom that are forever ready to tear asunder our industrialized existence by inventing a-human possibilities of life.

INTRODUCTION: HUMANISMS, POSTHUMANISMS, AND THEIR DISCONTENTS

1. Patterson, *Dark Pools: The Rise of the Machine Traders and the Rigging of the U.S. Stock Market* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2012), p. 9.

2. Barad, *Meeting the Universe Half Way: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2007).

3. In this regard, virtual symbolic trades differ from autopoietic systems, which are self-referential and closed. HFT assumes it is an autopoietic system, but the vibrancy of relations changes and opens the system. For more on systems theory, see Humberto R. Maturana and Francisco J. Varela, *Autopoeisis and Cognition: The Realization of the Living* (Hingham, Mass.: Kluwer Publishing, 1980).

4. Guattari refers to capitalism as "a semiotic operator" in "Capital as the Integral of Power Formations," *Soft Subversions*, ed. Sylvère Lotringer (Los Angeles, CA: Semiotext(e), 2009), p. 244. Capital does not merely represent social or economic relations; instead, capital operates and functions to reconfigure life, including in the production of subjectivities and ways of life. For more on what Gary Genosko called semiocapitalism, see his edited volume, *Felix Guattari and the Age of Semiocapitalism* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012). Franco "Bifo" Berardi also extends Guattari's analysis of semiocapitalism in *Precarious Rhapsody: Semiocapitalism and the Pathologies of the Post-Alpha Generation*, trans. Arianna Bov et al. (New York: Minor Compositions, 2009).

5. Galloway, *Protocol: How Control Exists after Decentralization* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2004), pp. 243–44.

6. These issues have been brought up by numerous scholars who problematize the question of the animal. See for example Matthew Calarco, *Zoographies: The Question of the Animal from Heidegger to Derrida* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008); Giorgio Agamben, *The Open: Man and Animal*, trans. Kevin Attell (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004); and J. M. Coetzee, *Elizabeth Costello* (New York: Penguin Books, 2005). See also Dominic Pettman's excellent intervention in *Species-Being: Human Error and Media Machines* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011). Scholars

devoted to an object-oriented ontology have emerged as the most strident bloodhounds for any whiff of anthropocentrism. I address them in chapter 3.

7. For a prosaic example, my smartphone has become so indispensable to my everyday existence that it problematizes one of the ongoing Western philosophical concerns, subject-object dualism. Its presence in my life supplants my memory, anticipates my intentions for a search based on the aggregation of all of my previous searches, becomes my primary means of communication with other people, and conducts my field of knowledge through searches. While all searches are seemingly infinite, they are guided by the limits of the search algorithms' programming, most concretely through advertising and the biases of the operating systems of three corporations (Google, Apple, and Microsoft). Do I direct my smartphone or does it direct me?

8. See Bernard Stiegler, *Technics and Time, 1: The Fault of Epimetheus*, trans. Richard Beardsworth (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988).

9. This is one of the reasons that Foucault did not embrace the idea of "living labor," for he was wary of reducing humans to spaces of work. However, Foucault as well as Marx and Negri conceive of beings as fields of energy, and may have more in common than appears at first blush. See Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1976).

10. Piketty, *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2015), p. 209.

11. *Bloomberg Businessweek* special issue, "The Electorate" (September 19–25, 2016), pp. 32–33.

12. Virtual and actual network technologies increasingly compress or transform space and time, including multimedia, biometric, computer, information, and biological technologies, as well as the techniques of neoliberal economics. This is not to suggest that the two formations are mutually exclusive, but rather to mark their co-implication; indeed, neoliberal economics has ushered in the intensification and dispersal of multimedia technologies, biotech, and so forth, despite the fact that most of these technologies, such as the internet and the TCP/IP protocol, were initially funded by the United States through the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA).

13. Marx, *Capital*, vol. 1, *A Critique of Political Economy*, trans. Ben Fowkes (London and New York: Penguin, 1976).

14. Dardot and Laval, *The New Way of the World: On Neoliberal Society*, trans. Gregory Elliott (New York: Verso, 2014), p. 11.

15. Williams, *Culture and Society, 1780–1950* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983).

16. Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, trans. Catherine Porter (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1994).

17. Patterson, *Dark Pools*.

18. Ibid. On university endowments, see Victor Fleisher, "Stop Universities from Hoarding Money," *New York Times*, 19 August 2015, http://www.nytimes.com/2015/08/19/opinion/stop-universities-from-hoarding-money.html?ref=opinion&_r=0. See also Linda Keslar, "University Endowments Invest in Hedge Funds," *Plan Sponsor Magazine*, May 1996, http://www.plansponsor.com/MagazineArticle.aspx?id=6442461906.

19. Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, p. 178.

20. Like the work of Barad, my own process-oriented ontology (dare I use that term?), which is indebted to the work of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, nonlinear thermodynamics, biology, systems theory, and the exceptional work of Isabelle Stengers and Manuel DeLanda, argues for agency existing as relations of force. Yet we need to extend Barad's analysis of agential realism to our monetary systems, which remake ontology due to their effects on environments and access to energy.

21. The SEC lacked adequate knowledge of the technologies that brought the event into existence, which was made all the more challenging given the speed and interconnected networks of the algo wars. Instead, the SEC merely identified the possibilities of human "fat finger" keyboard errors by a programmer or trader, or evil intention through hacking or terrorist organizations, thereby anthropomorphizing through a series of figurative possibilities the causes for the crash in order to restore human intelligibility to a dynamic distributed network. See Patterson, *Dark Pools*.

22. Meillassoux, *After Finitude: An Essay on the Necessity of Contingency*, trans. Ray Brassier (New York: Continuum, 2010), p. 28.

23. Levi R. Bryant, *The Democracy of Objects* (New York: Open Humanities Press, 2011), p. 290. My analysis directly resonates with Alexander Galloway's "The Poverty of Philosophy: Realism and Post-Fordism," *Critical Inquiry* 39, no. 2 (Winter 2013): 346–66, as we are both challenging the apoliticism of OOO and speculative realism, its ahistorical essentialism, and what Galloway names ironically its "capitalist realism." I refer to the latter as the synergy of speculative capital and speculative realism. In the term *post-Fordism*, Galloway is referencing financial and cognitive capitalism; however, he focuses instead on how OOO and speculative realism deny the historicality of existence and being in their ontological analysis, and in the process basically deny the very status of the political.

24. Exceptions include Jane Bennet, *Vibrant Materialism: A Political Ecology of Things* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2011) and William Connolly, *The Fragility of Things: Self-Organizing Processes, Neoliberal Fantasies, and Democratic Action* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2014). These authors are more readily sympathetic to Latour and Deleuze than is OOO. Levi Bryant does also speak to the social, as do Ian Bogost and Timothy

Morton, but the examples serve more to fit their theories than to provide concrete engagements with the real, an especially curious point given their emphasis on avoiding correlationism.

25. See Karl Marx, "Fragment on Machines," in *Grundrisse*, trans. Martin Nicolaus (New York: Penguin Books, 1993), pp. 690–712, and Yann Moulier-Boutang, *Cognitive Capitalism*, trans. Ed Emery (New York: Polity, 2012). Consequently, I disagree with arguments from the 1990s by the Italian Marxists Franco "Bifo" Berardi, Christian Marazzi, and Paolo Virno, despite the fact that they have offered some of the most coherent and critical analyses of the economic forces I am interrogating here. See Paolo Virno and Michael Hardt, eds., *Radical Thought in Italy: A Potential Politics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).

26. Michael Lewis, *Flash Boys: A Wall Street Revolt* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2015).

27. While Maturana and Varela initially described autopoietic systems within cognitive biology to outline living systems, Maturana at least was leery of transporting these ideas into social systems because of the dangers of biologism (eugenics, genetic engineering). Other scholars, from second-order systems theorist Niklas Luhman to Manuel DeLanda in his brilliant *A Thousand Years of Nonlinear History* (New York: Zone Books, 2000), show the importance of autopoiesis for thinking material concerns that affect what was called "society" in modernity. For this point, see John Protevi's *Political Affect: Connecting the Social and the Somatic* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009).

28. In this regard, I am borrowing from Jacques Rancière's engagements with politics and aesthetics the need to think aesthetics as more than a theory of sense experience; following Kant in *The Critique of Pure Reason*, Rancière sees aesthetics as "the system of *a priori* forms determining what presents itself to sense experience." *The Politics of Aesthetics*, trans. Gabriel Rockhill (London: Continuum, 2004), p. 13. For Rancière, the aesthetic is political insofar as it frustrates the distribution of the sensible in which policing (understood as regulating reality within its current social formation) replaces and limits politics and thereby possibilities of existence.

29. Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), p.113.

30. Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Constance Farrington (New York: Grove Press, 1967).

31. Said, *Humanism and Democratic Criticism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995), p. 31.

32. Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things*, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Pantheon Books, 1962), p. 387; Jacques Derrida, "The Ends of

Man," in *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972), pp.111–36. Derrida's piece was originally given as a lecture at Johns Hopkins University introducing the French theory that would become known as poststructuralism. He purposely dated the lecture May 12, 1968, at the height of the May occupation of the Sorbonne, right when the unions had decided to support the students.

33. Stiegler, *States of Shock: Stupidity and Knowledge in the 21st Century* (Malden, Mass.: Polity Press, 2015), p. 101.

34. Haraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Feminist Socialism in the Late Twenty Century," in *Simians, Cyborgs, Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (New York: Routledge, 1991), p. 292.

35. Haraway, *When Species Meet* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007). For a devastating critique of Haraway that informs my thinking, see Dominic Pettman, *Human Error: Species Being and Media Machines* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011).

36. Braidotti, *The Posthuman* (New York: Polity Books, 2013), p. 12.

37. Ibid., p. 119.

38. Foucault, *On the Hermeneutics of the Subject*, trans. Graham Burchell (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005).

39. Deleuze, "Postscript on Control Societies," in *Negotiations, 1972–1990*, trans. Martin Joughin (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995). Cited in text hereafter as "Control Societies."

40. Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987).

41. Simondon, quoted in Muriel Combes, *Gilbert Simondon and the Philosophy of the Transindividual*, trans. Thomas La Marre (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2013), p. 31. I must here mark my debt to this excellent text and to La Marre's superb conjoining essay, for they inform my understanding of Simondon.

42. Gilbert Simondon, "Genesis of the Individual," in *Incorporations*, ed. Sanford Kwinter and Jonathan Crary (New York: Zone Books, 1992), p. 301.

43. Ibid. Italics in original.

44. Simondon does refer to subjects, but they emerge only in a state of anxiety from being alone and without encounters with others, as the temporal culmination of processes of transindividuation. See Combes, *Gilbert Simondon*, and the collection edited by Arne De Boever, Alex Murray, Jon Roffe, and Ashley Woodward, *Gilbert Simondon: Being and Technology* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013).

45. "The problem of the individual is that of perceptive worlds, but the problem of the subject is that of the heterogeneity between perceptive worlds and the affective world, between the individual and the preindividual; this

problem is that of the subject in as much as it exists: the subject is individual and other than individual; it is incompatible with itself. . . . The subject can only coincide with itself in the individuation of the collective, because the individuated being and the preindividual being that are in it cannot coincide directly: there is a disparation between perceptions and affectivity." Simondon, quoted in Combes, *Gilbert Simondon*, p. 16. The quote originally appeared in *Individuation psychique et collective* [Psychic and Collective Individuation] (Paris: Aubier, 1989), p. 108.

46. "Transduction is characterized by the fact that the result of this process is a concrete network including all the original terms. The resulting system is made up of the concrete, and it comprehends all of the concrete. The transductive order retains all the concrete and is characterized by the conservation of information, whereas induction requires a loss of information. Following the same path as the dialectic, transduction conserves and integrates the opposed aspects. Unlike the dialectic, transduction does not presuppose the existence of a previous time period to act as a framework in which the genesis unfolds, time itself being the solution and dimension of the discovered systematic: time comes from the preindividual just like the other dimensions that determine individuation." Simondon, "Genesis of the Individual," p. 315.

47. Simondon, *On the Mode of Existence of Technical Objects*, trans. Cecile Malaspina and John Rogove (Minneapolis: Univocal Publishing, 2017), p. 118.

48. Deleuze, "Immanence: A Life," in *Pure Immanence: Essays on a Life*, trans. Anne Boyman (New York: Zone Books, 2005), p. 27.

49. *Ibid*., p. 29.

50. Thacker, *After Life* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010).

51. Using the work of Deleuze and Guattari on language and literature, I probe heretically the molecular aspects of language that operate imperceptibly within semiotics and representation, and mark language's function as dynamic matter. See Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, and Gilles Deleuze, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, trans. Dana Polan (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986).

52. See Rana Foroohar, *Makers and Takers: The Rise of Finance and the Fall of American Business* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2016).

1. Market Humans: *Homo Oeconomicus*, Entrepreneurs, and Neoliberal Beings of Risk

1. Matt Taibbi outlines these issues and their consequences in the American context, specifically with regard to inequalities of access to legal protection and actual lawyers for the impoverished. See *The Divide: American Injustice in the Age of the Wealth Gap* (New York: Random House, 2014).

2. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, eds. Quentin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith (New York: International Publishers, 1971). Hereafter cited in text as *Prison Notebooks*.

3. For a perspective different from my engagement with Gramsci, see Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1958), on *homo faber* as the creator and user of tools and as distinguished from labor.

4. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1977).

5. Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. Talcott Parsons (New York: Routledge, 2001).

6. Becker, *Human Capital: A Theoretical and Empirical Analysis, with Special Reference to Education*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).

7. I have benefitted immeasurably from Bernard Harcourt's readings of Foucault, as well as from the fascinating exchange at the University of Chicago between Harcourt, Gary Becker, who figures prominently in Foucault's lectures, and Francois Ewald, Foucault's student and a "rightist Foucault," according to Antonio Negri. These lectures fit within Foucault's studies on the idea of governmentality as distinct from theories of state and sovereignty. Moreover, Foucault was also theorizing the status of truth, the epistemological techniques for rendering ontology to beings, and how life is recognized. When Foucault engaged in these studies, neoliberalism was a marginal philosophy created by economists. Becker's and Schultz's theories were central to ideas of thinking development differently, specifically in investment strategies and institutional policies for the disadvantaged, and they offer a different theory of the human as capital with the best liberal intentions, though as Becker acknowledges, "you treat people like machines" when you develop an economics based on human capital. While some Marxists equate Foucault's exploration of neoliberalism with a celebration of the philosophy, I think it would be a mistake to assume that Foucault is hostile to Marxism *tout court*, though he is certainly hostile to the Maoist and Stalinist Marxism dominant in the 1970s intellectual scene in France. See "Becker on Ewald on Foucault on Becker," *Carceral Notebooks* 7 (2011), http://www.thecarceral.org/cn7_Becker_Ewald_Conversation.pdf ; Gary S. Becker, Francois Ewald, and Bernard Harcourt, "'Becker on Ewald on Foucault on Becker': American Neoliberalism and Michel Foucault's 1979 'Birth of Biopolitics' Lectures" (Coase-Sandor Institute for Law and Economics Working Paper No. 614, 2012).

8. Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1978–1979*, trans. Graham Burchell, rpt. ed. (New York: Picador Books, 2010), 292–93. Hereafter cited in text as *Biopolitics*.

9. I discuss Polyani at length in chapter 3.

10. In the context of eugenics, Foucault warns, "As soon as a society poses itself in the problem of the improvement of its human capital in general, it is inevitable that the problem of control, screening, and improvement of the human capital of individuals . . . is called for" (*Biopolitics*, 228).

11. The phrase *grid of intelligibility* in these lectures refers to governmentality, but it is a recurring theme in Foucault's work to mark the nexus of power and knowledge and the network of force relations. In this sense, he is employing this term, I think, in a manner reminiscent of Simondon's *individuation*, as assemblages of modes of existence, forces, affects, and interrelated processes, which through their interaction still are able to resonate and be thought.

12. I am marking here the distinction between policing and rule of law, a topic of great concern in most of Foucault's work, and a distinction that becomes more readily apparent as state institutions usurp codified mechanisms of law in light of emergency actions during which the rule of law can be suspended. I discuss these issues further in part 2, devoted to human rights and humanitarianism.

13. Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1977–1978*, trans. G. Burchell (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007), p. 353.

14. Here I want to mark my debt to Wendy Brown's work on Foucault. Her *Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution* (Brooklyn, N.Y.: Zone Books, 2015) is a superb project correlative to my own, and we draw many similar conclusions concerning neoliberalism as a political rationality and epistemological formation for recreating life itself. We differ, however, on a fundamental point regarding Foucault's project, namely his formulation of civil society as a means for governing less. Brown critiques Foucault on this point, viewing civil society as still too tied up with sovereign modes of power formalized by the state. In my reading, Foucault is thinking how the state and its mechanisms of enclosures are reformulated by the nonstatist techniques of civil society for controlling life. While Foucault is speaking directly about liberalism here, he is indicating that liberalism's mode of governance extends to the formation of the world it enacts, and thus the transactional reality is an economic one that may have guided even the corporatist state. In short, I think Foucault was more mindful of Marxian categories than Brown's account recognizes. Foucault seems to have been focusing on the failures of contemporary French Marxist discourses that at the time he was writing would have been affected still by Althusser and the Stalinism of the French Communist Party.

15. Bernard Harcourt. *The Illusions of Markets: Punishment and the Myth of the Natural Order* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2012).

16. As an example, billionaire developer and branding machine Donald Trump led a populist campaign based on nativism, white supremacy, and authoritarian leadership as the means to "Make America Great Again," per its slogan, which promised implicitly to restore American supremacy by making the world safe for white people, sanctioning their treatment of others as sub-

humans. Tolerance and equality and the idea of the United States as a melting pot would be forsaken, while whites would be liberated from the tyranny of political correctness.

17. Max Weber makes this very same point in the 1905 text of *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*.

18. A. Kapur, N. Macleod, and S. Singh, "Plutonomy: Buying Luxuries, Explaining Global Imbalances," Citigroup Equity Strategy Industry Note, 16 October 2005; https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B-5-JeCa2Z7hNWQyN2I1YjYtZTJjNy00ZWU3LWEwNDEtMGVhZDVjNzEwZDZm/edit?hl=en_US. Hereafter cited as "Plutonomy.

19. Ong, "On the Edges of Empire: Flexible Citizenship among Chinese in Diaspora," *Positions* 1, no. 3 (1993): 745–78.

20. Ong, *Neoliberalism as Exception: Mutations in Citizenship and Sovereignty* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006). See also Arif Dirlik, "Chinese History and the Question of Orientalism," *History and Theory* 35, no. 4 (1996): 96–118. Market humans resonate with what Leslie Sklair has called the transnational capital class and what Manuel Castells has described as the integrated global networks of the "spaces of flows," space-time compression due to digital technologies. Nevertheless, unlike Sklair, I see this reconfiguration of the human as not just economic but also cultural, hence my engagements with Gramsci and Foucault. See Sklair, *The Transnational Capital Class* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1996), and Castells, *The Rise of the Network Society*, vol. 1 of *The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture* (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1996).

22. Municipalities have been fighting Uber on this front. In exchange for being taxed, Uber has been legally recognized as a corporation, but it does not have to comply with the same rules and regulations as formally regulated taxi companies. I am making a similar claim on Uber to what Nick Srnicek describes as "platform capitalism." For Srnicek, such monopolistic companies as Amazon, Uber, and Facebook are producing platforms that not only create new business models and forms of capitalism, but also reorganize societies around these platform's biases. See *Platform Capitalism* (Malden, Mass: Polity Press, 2017).

23. See the Uber website's pitch to drivers, "Drive with Uber. Earn money on your schedule," https://www.uber.com/a/us/?var=org1&exp=70622_t1.

24. See Rory Carroll, "How Wealth of Silicon Valley's Tech Elite Created a World Apart," *The Guardian*, 25 May 2015, http://www.theguardian.com/technology/2013/may/26/silicon-valley-elite-san-fra ncisco. Other companies such as Twitter, Square, and Uber received enormous tax breaks to locate their headquarters in San Francisco. The pervasiveness of such

Silicon Valley firms has made San Francisco the least affordable city in the United States.

25. Duff McDonald, *The Golden Passport: Harvard Business School, the Limits of Capitalism, and the Moral Failure of the Harvard MBA* (New York: Harper Collins, 2016).

26. Bernard Stiegler describes the effect of the industrialization of life as creating legions of disaffected people, particularly among youth, who can no longer believe in anything and so fear nothing, because their desire has been channeled to the market, which nevertheless denies them entry. I would argue that such figurations as the entrepreneur still offer hope, as exemplified by the rise of Donald Trump as president of the United States in 2017, as there are no counterfictions to embrace, except racial, ethnic, and national identities. See Stiegler, *Uncontrollable Societies of Disaffected Individuals: Disbelief and Discredit*, vol. 2, trans. Daniel Ross (London: Polity Press, 2012).

27. See Siva Vaidhyanathan, *The Googlization of Everything (and Why We Should Worry)* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2011); Douglas Rushkoff, *Present Shock: When Everything Happens Now* (New York: Penguin Books, 2014); Astra Taylor, *The People's Platform: Taking Back Power and Culture in the Digital Era* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2014); and Alexander Galloway, *Protocol: How Control Exists after Decentralization* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2004).

28. The famous case is Santa Clara County vs. Southern Pacific Railroad, which established the precedent, which has since been expanded by subsequent Supreme Court judgements. For more context, see Morton J. Horwitz, "Santa Clara Revisited: The Development of Corporate Theory," West Virginia Law Review, 88 (1985): 173–224.

29. Luhmann, "Modern Society Shocked by Its Risks," *Social Sciences Research Centre, University of Hong Kong, Occasional Papers* 17 (1996); http://hub.hku.hk/handle/10722/42552, p. 1.

30. Beck, *World at Risk*, trans. Ciaran Cronin (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2008), pp. 8–9. Hereafter cited in text.

31. Ng, "Hedge Funds May Get AIG Cash," *Wall Street Journal*, 18 March 2009; http://online.wsj.com/article/SB123734123180365061.html.

32. Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism, Democracy* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1992). Interestingly however, Schumpeter conceived capitalism as democratically withering from within, in an argument complete with readings of Karl Marx, a fact that has been utterly overlooked in management circles in light of the branding of the entrepreneur as the universal subject of history, as in Bill Gates' *Business Using a Digital Nervous System* (New York: Warner Books, 1999).

33. Martin, "Specters of Finance: Limits to Knowledge and the Politics of Crisis," *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 34, no. 4 (October 2010): 361.

34. Marazzi, *Capital and Language: From the New Economy to the War Economy*, trans. Gregory Conti (Cambridge, Mass,: Semiotext(e), 2008), p. 141.Ibid., p. 141.

35. Bauman, *Collateral Damage: Social Inequalities in a Global Age* (Cambridge: Polity, 2011); Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (New York: Zone Books, 1998); Agier, *Managing the Undesirables: Refugee Camps and Humanitarian Government*, trans. David Fernbach (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2011). I engage these authors more extensively below.

2. UTILITARIAN HUMANISM: "WE OTHER HUMANS" REGULATED BY CULTURE

1. The International Criminal Court does not include all countries; indeed, the largest monopoly of global force, the United States, does not recognize the Court, which shows that its goal of global authority has not yet been reached.

2. UNESCO's constitution indicates that it was created "to contribute to peace and security by promoting collaboration among nations through education, science and culture in order to further universal respect for justice, for the rule of law and for the human rights and fundamental freedoms which are affirmed for the peoples of the world, without distinction of race, sex, language or religion, by the Charter of the United Nations." Science, education, and culture would codify certain universal values or norms that would be reasserted through the consensus of their utility, and then, in turn, legitimated through prescriptions (laws) that would be guaranteed by the United Nations. See UNESCO's history at http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=6207&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html.

3. *World Culture Report 1998: Culture, Creativity and Markets* (Paris: UNESCO, 1999); *World Culture Report 2000: Cultural Diversity, Conflict and Pluralism* (Paris: UNESCO, 2000). Hereafter cited in text as WCR 1998 and WCR 2000.

4. Many of these scholars from around the world reside in and pay taxes to the United States, which rarely pays its debts to the UN—or to UNESCO, for that matter, because the United States withdrew from it in 1984, rejoined in 2002, and again will withdraw in 2019.

5. To make such a claim is not to belittle the importance of critiquing either universal humanity or globalization. However, I do not want to contribute yet another analysis of how universal humanism forces "others" subjected to, and by, empire, colonialism, financial capital, gender and class oppression, and other emergent forces and powers to come into the fold of humanity or be thrown outside this all-too-human order. Neither would I suggest that cultures do not exist or have differences, nor that the state or

a coherent national ethnos should be embraced as the only way to save humans.

6. UNESCO, "Constitution," UNESCO website, http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=15244&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html.

7. Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975–1976*, trans. David Macey (New York: Picador, 2003).

8. The important texts of the organic tradition include the work of Kant and the Hegelian dialectical tradition, perhaps best emblematized in the foundational work of Alexander von Humboldt. For important texts, see Immanuel Kant, *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, trans. Victor Lyle Dowdell (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1978); G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977) and *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History: Introduction*, trans. H. B. Nisbet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975); and Alexander von Humboldt, *Cosmos: A Sketch of the Physical Description of the Universe*, vol. 1, trans. E. C. Otte (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997).

9. The operative texts of this organic mode of thinking the human are Kant's *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* and Charles Darwin, *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection* (New York: New American Library, 1958). This edition of *Origin of Species* has an introduction by Julian Huxley, who once worked very closely with UNESCO.

10. In the general introduction to *World Culture Report 1998: Culture, Creativity and Markets*, Lourdes Arizpe writes, "Cultural diversity is here to stay. But in addition to its inevitability, diversity is desirable for several reasons. First, diversity is valuable in its own right as a manifestation of the human spirit. Second, it is required by principles of equity, human rights, and self-determination. Third, in an analogy with biological diversity, it can help humanity to adapt to the limited environmental resources of the world. In this context diversity is linked to sustainability. Fourth, it is needed to oppose political and economic dependence and oppression. Fifth, it is aesthetically pleasing to have an array of different cultures. Sixth, it stimulates the mind. And seventh, it can provide a reserve of knowledge and experience about good and useful ways of doing things" (18).

11. Gilles Deleuze's description of the "beautiful soul" encapsulates UNESCO's proposition, whereby difference is measured through technological acquisition: "The greatest danger [of thinking pure difference] is that of lapsing into the representations of a beautiful soul: there are only reconcilable and federative differences, far removed from bloody struggles. The beautiful soul says: we are different, but not opposed." *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), p. xx.

12. I want to stress that no uniform UNESCO position exists other than the general statements by the abovementioned Mayor and introductions and organization rubrics led by Lourdes Arizpe, chair of the Scientific Committee of the World Culture Report, and professor at the Centro Regional de Investigaciones Multidisciplinaras (CRIM) at Universidad Nacional Autonóma de México, and Ann-Belinda S. Preis, the executive coordinator, World Culture Report Unit, Sector for Culture, UNESCO. Indeed, there is a dramatic tension throughout the document between quantitative and qualitative analysis, often represented by the differences in disciplinary training and dominant research methods in the humanities and social sciences. Economist and philosopher Amartya Sen, for example, offers an important critique of the functionalizing of knowledge and the dangers of the "uncritical acceptance" of cultural indices and indicators in his contribution to the 1998 WCR, "Culture, Freedom and Independence." Perhaps in response to this danger, the 2000 WCR, *Cultural Diversity, Conflict and Pluralism*, has an entire section devoted to thinking through the challenges of quantifying human practices and cultural indices; see "Part Six: Measuring Culture: National and International Practice." UNESCO concludes in this section, however, that ultimately it is worth the risk in order to have data to make general deductions about humans, culture, and economic globalization.

13. Martin Heidegger, "The Age of the World Picture," in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, trans. William Lovitt (New York: Harper Books, 1974). Edmund Husserl certainly viewed this as a possibility in his *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Philosophy*, trans. David Carr (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1970).

14. Michel Foucault meticulously documents these concerns in *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage, 1970).

15. "Act in such a way that you treat humanity, whether in your own person, or in the person of another, always at the same time as an end and never as a means." Immanuel Kant, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. James Ellington (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing House, 1981), p. 36.

16. John Stuart Mill, *Utilitarianism and Other Essays* (New York: Penguin Books, 1987), p. 278.

17. Jeremy Bentham, *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* (Amherst, N.Y.: Prometheus Books, 1988, p. 241.

18. Mill, *Utilitarianism*, p. 278.

19. Ibid., pp. 288–89.

20. Marx, *Capital*, vol. 1, trans. Ben Fowkes (New York: Penguin Books, 1977), p. 758, n. 51.

21. Foucault, "Truth and Juridical Forms," in *Power: Essential Works of Foucault, 1954–1984*, vol. 3, ed. James Faubion (New York: The New Press, 2001), p. 58.

22. Daniel Bell in *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism* (New York: Basic Books, 1976) contends that capitalism erodes the moral foundations on which it was initially based, and reorganizes culture as the primary mode of organization. UNESCO is following a similar "end of ideology" premise by making culture somehow merely one set among other sets within the larger organic construction of the human.

23. Despite the importance of culture, Mayor offers "sustainable development"—a socio-economic category—and peace as the sole mechanisms to continue the "human" project of developing or progressing—the only narrative for coexistence toward a similar goal of species conservation and economic development. Life is no longer marked by a notion of being or nature, but through transcendent ideas that lack material instantiation—peace and the economic program of sustainable development.

24. UNESCO follows a typical secular idea after Kant, that no essential given knowledge of human nature exists a priori, and knowledge emerges in the world of experience—produced by humans through coherent structures of observation. Knowledge as the culmination of the conditions of experience of the world creates human practices as objects of knowledge through culture, an epistemology guaranteed by institutional norms. Different cultures are merely facets of the larger technical system of the utilitarian human, guaranteed now in the secular age by the markets, states, and cultural groupings. Consequently, information on specific cultures helps differing sets of humans to communicate better and removes friction from the total human system to avoid strife. Therefore humans need only gather together knowledge of different identities and cultural practices into a larger reservoir or archive of available knowledge on themselves. The cultural system will not only help humans to "know themselves," but will also provide strategies for influencing others, because people in specific territories are reduced to the highly coded and naturalized cultural matrices that are institutionalized to reflect this culture. Humans function thereby as cultural artifacts to be archived in various cultural wings of the museum of the human.

25. Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998).

26. W. E. B. DuBois would call this predifferentiated energy, this ahuman form of agency, the Negro. See *The Souls of Black Folks*, ed. Harry Louis Gates, Jr. (New York: Norton, 1999). As the so-called humanist Marx, early in his writing, Marx might have called this predifferentiated energy "species being," and later "labor," which capital tries to domesticate and harness for its own devices.

27. Agamben calls these very processes *forms-of-life*: "*Homo Sacer* is supposed to, as I said at the beginning, comprise four volumes in total. The last and most interesting for me will not be dedicated to an historical discussion. I would like to work on the concepts of forms-of-life and lifestyles. What I call a form-of-life is a life that can never be separated from its form, a life in which it is never possible to separate something such as bare life." See Ulrich Raff, "Interview with Giorgio Agamben," *German Law Journal* 5, no. 5 (May 2004), http://www.germanlawjournal.com/article.php?id=437. See also Agamben, "Form-of-Life," in *Means Without End: Notes on Politics*, trans. Cesare Casarino (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999).

28. Arjun Appadurai and Katerina Stenou, "Sustainable Pluralism and the Future of Belonging," WCR 2000, p. 112.

29. Ibid., p. 122.

30. Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996), and *Who Are We? The Challenges to America's National Identity* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2004).

31. In *Clash of Civilizations*, Huntington divides the world into seven distinct and homogenous civilizations: Sinic or Confucian, Japanese, Hindu, Islamic, Western, Latin American, and African. (The specific characteristics of the latter two are curiously understated because he suggests that they may be incorporated into one of the above civilizations.) He calls for "the West," including Europe, the United States and Canada, to "shore up" and unify their "ways of life," based on "Western Enlightenment" ideals and individualism to maintain their economic interests, in contradistinction to Islamicism and Confucianism, the two cultures most threatening to the "West's way of life." Huntington's great Orientalist fear is "kin-country rallying" between Islamicism and Confucianism in the East. In his formation, there is little difference between the two; they are his conception of the West's negation.

32. Richard Slotkin, *Regeneration through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600–1860* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1973) offers a critique of the American frontier myth that could offer an interesting historical juxtaposition with Huntington.

33. Huntington, *Who Are We?* p. 338. Huntington is a political realist whose own statism has been severely criticized by neoliberalists in their generalized attack on anything state-oriented that could threaten the general market orientation of everyday life.

34. Ibid., p. 340

35. Huntington borrows liberally from contemporary multiculturalist discourses read through U.S. captivity narratives of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in order to offer, ironically, a fascinating and tautological incarnation of post-Enlightenment thought. He amalgamates religious language with secular Enlightenment political ideals under siege from the same cultural, religious, and social alternatives that underwrite them.

36. Foucault, "Governmentality," in *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*, ed. Graham Burchell et al. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), p. 103.

37. See Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Constance Farrington (New York: Grove Press, 1963).

38. Wolfe, *Animal Rites: American Culture, the Discourse of Species, and Posthumanist Theory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), p. 1.

39. Cochran, *Twilight of the Literary: Figures of Thought in the Age of Print* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), p. 245.

40. *The New Science of Giambattista Vico*, trans. Thomas Goddard Bergin and Max Frisch (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1948), p. 8. Hereafter cited as *New Science*.

41. Walter Benjamin, like Heidegger and Henri Bergson, described this search for a proper place for the human subject within time as the danger of historicism, the spatialization of time to organize and give an uncritical rational and narrative order to time.

42. Michel Foucault has described this in a different context as the "Cartesian moment" in the formation of the subject, namely, marking a distinction between spirituality and the epistemological concerns of philosophy; see *The Hermeneutics of the Subject: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1981–1982*, trans. Graham Burchell (New York: Picador, 2005). Foucault identifies the Cartesian moment with the formulation of the sovereign subject, but also with a mechanistic determinism that lets epistemological truth stand for dynamic and persistently changing concepts: "I think the modern age of history of truth begins when knowledge itself and knowledge alone gives access to the truth. That is to say, it is when the philosopher (or the scientist, or simply someone who seeks the truth) can recognize the truth and have access to it in himself and through his acts of knowledge alone, without anything else being demanded of him and without his having to alter or change in any way his being as subject" (17). He defines the production of selves, the care or work on the self, as brought about between a philosophical incorporation of the subject through knowing, and spirituality. He then theorizes pre-Christian modes of subjectivity in order to think other traditions that have been incorporated into knowledge instead of the physical and affective processes of work on the self: "I think we could call 'spirituality' the search, practice, and experience through which the subject carries out the necessary transformations on himself in order to have access to the truth. . . . It postulates that for the subject to have right of access to the truth he must be changed, transformed, shifted, and become, to some extent and up to a certain point, other than himself" (15).

43. I am trying to draw attention to how Vico works between two separate philosophical traditions of spirit (*geist*) and life (*leben*). In so doing, I am evoking Donald Verene's argument in *Vico's Science of Imagination*, (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1992) distinguishing Vico from Cassirer. Vico is critical of Descartes' geometrical method and faith in reason and observation, and instead evokes a more figurative or poetic formulation of truth as invention or creation, what I am calling life and the ahuman. Indeed, Vico emphasizes that human life is perpetually created, that it is not something that is predetermined or inherited from the gods, but merely a habit of thought passed down through the generations that eventually can lead to the production of a civil code.

44. Edward Said in *Beginnings: Intention and Method* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1975) refers to these historicist processes as *filiation*, which maintains continuity and connection between the past and present within the family, the institution of marriage, and biological and geographical ground. Said uses Vico's analysis in *The New Science* to discuss how the metaphorics of the corpse and the archive can express filiative and affiliative relationships between the past and present through such practices as language. Affiliation is similarly a historicist gesture, albeit with analogical and displaced connections to the reductionist, essentialized, but institutionalized will or identity. Memory and re-membering the fragments gives an afterlife to the dead that can suffocate the multiple and simultaneously operating orders of time in several temporal horizons. Benjamin critiques the historicist project of constructing the past through a faith in the ability to render the past transparent within the cumulative archive of stored knowledge as well as within the burgeoning memory industry. The systematization of the past is dangerous because of its manufacturing of a sustained coherence, with the human agent as the center and *measure* of all things. Piecing together the fragments in an organic coherence enframes time's circulation, dynamicism, evanescence, and flux: "The true picture of the past flits by. The past can be seized only as an image which flashes up at the instant when it can be recognized and is never seen again. For every image of the past that is not recognized by the present as one of its own concerns threatens to disappear irretrievably." Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History," in *Illuminations*, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), p. 255.

45. In *The Nick of Time: Politics, Evolution, and the Untimely* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), Grosz has said, "Living beings are the actualization of only part of the past. Indeed, any actualization leaves part of the virtual unactualized, and in the various processes of divergence and proliferation it also induces new virtualities, new lines of divergence. It is precisely

this unactualized potential of the virtual that is the condition of all radical politics, which takes as its aim the transformation of the present" (253).

46. Keith Ansell Pearson, *Germinal Life: The Difference and Repetition of Gilles Deleuze* (New York: Routledge, 1999); Brian Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002); Wendy Brown, *Politics Out of History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001); William Connolly, *Neuropolitics: Thinking, Culture, Speed* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003); and Connolly, *Pluralism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006).

47. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), p. 261.

3. THE HEDGE FUND OF REALITY: ONTOLOGY AND FINANCIAL DERIVATIVES

1. I am marking distinctions between OOO and Latour's actor network theory (ANT). The latter focuses on emergence and does not necessarily consider objects' existence beyond their actions. The OOO philosophers' critique of ANT claims that it and other new materialist thinking misses all objecthood beyond the constituent parts, expression, or actions of the object.

2. See Peter Wolfendale, *Object-Oriented Ontology: The Noumenon's New Clothes* (Falmouth, Cornwall: Urbanomic Media, 2014); Ray Brassier, "Afterword: Speculative Autopsy," in Wolfendale, *Object-Oriented Ontology*, pp. 407–22; Steven Shaviro, *The Universe of Things: On Speculative Realism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014).

3. Levi Bryant, *The Democracy of Objects* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: Open Humanities Press, 3022). In this section I focus primarily on Bryant, Timothy Morton, and Ian Bogost because, unlike Quentin Meillassoux and Graham Harman, they practice OOO in concrete contexts rather than merely elaborating philosophical expositions. Citations in the text are to Morton, *Hyperobjects: Philosophy and Ecology after the End of the World* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013); Bogost, *Alien Phenomenology, or What It's Like to Be a Thing* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. 2012); Meillassoux, *After Finitude: An Essay on the Necessity of Contingency*, tr. Ray Brassier (London: Bloomsbury, 2009); and Harman, *Tool-Being: Heidegger and the Metaphysics of Objects* (Chicago: Open Court, 2002). I was unable to consider Morton's argument in *Humankind: Solidarity with Nonhuman People* (New York: Verso, 2017) while writing this chapter, as it was published while in press.

4. Shaviro offers a fairly thorough critique in *The Universe of Things*.

5. The important collection by Diana Coole and Samantha Frost, *New Materialisms: Ontology, Agency, and Politics* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University

Press, 2010), provides examples of these approaches, as do most of the authors I cited in the last chapter with respect to haecceity.

6. Harman, *The Quadruple Object* (Alresford, Hampshire: Zero Books, 2011).

7. Maurizio Lazzarato, *Signs and Machines* (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2014); Franco "Bifo" Berardi, *Poetry and Finance* (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2014); Bernard Stiegler, *For a New Critique of Political Economy*, trans. Daniel Ross (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2010); Robert Reich, *Saving Capitalism for the Many, Not the Few* (New York: Knopf, 2015); Thomas Piketty, *Capital in the Twenty-First Century* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2015).

8. Piketty, *Capital*, and Krippner, *Capitalizing on Crisis: The Political Origins of the Rise of Finance* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2011).

9. I am indebted to Rana Foroohar's *Makers and Takers: The Rise of Finance and the Fall of American Business* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2016) for outlining how corporations are increasingly functioning like banks. Foroohar, a business columnist at *Time*, synthesizes how broken the free market is in light of intensified finance.

10. Turner, *Between Debt and the Devil* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016),

11. See Faroohar, *Makers and Takers*.

12. In the aftermath of the 2008 economic crisis, Dodd-Frank regulations actually moved considerable financial speculation away from the banks and publicly traded companies to private equity and hedge funds because the latter do not have to report what they are doing to generate wealth (how much debt they are taking on, what they are leveraging, etc.). Underfunded state pension funds and retirement accounts increasingly look to equity firms and hedge funds to make up for state disinvestment in their obligations to employee pensions. These companies do not need to disclose their fee structure or necessarily have to work in their clients' interests, and there is no problem with that so long as they bring a favorable rate of return.

13. Marx, *Capital*, vol. 1, trans. Ben Fowkes (New York: Penguin 1971), p. 163. Cited hereafter in text.

14. See Marx, *Capital*, vol. 1, https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1867–c1/ch01.htm.

15. "Capital is dead labour, which, vampire-like, lives only by sucking living labour, and lives the more, the more labour it sucks" (Marx, *Capital*, 1:342).

16. Antonio Negri has foregrounded this element of Marx in virtually all of his writing. See *The Savage Anomaly*, trans. Michael Hardt (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994).

17. I neither dismiss the limits of Marx's thought due to his Hegelianism and dialectics, at least in the three volumes of *Capital*, nor do I discount the

limits of Marx's humanism and sense that the human as political project could be emancipatory. Nonetheless, Marx's oeuvre demonstrates that the human is not a substantialist entity, but an object of knowledge that works like a perpetual motion machine that is consistently altered by historical forces and time.

18. Shaviro, *Universe of Things*, pp. 36, 37. The quotation from Harman is from *Guerrilla Metaphysics: Phenomenology and the Carpentry of Things* (Chicago: Open Court, 2005), p. 85.

19. Shaviro, *Universe of Things*, p. 8. Shaviro's quotation from Whitehead is from *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology* (New York: The Free Press, 1978), p. 50.

20. György Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Dialectics*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1968), p. 100.

21. Marx, *Capital*, vol. 3, trans. David Ferbach (New York: Penguin Books, 1991), pp. 596, 601. Chapter 29 on the banking system and "fictitious capital" shows Marx's proleptic thinking on securities, and what would be called derivatives, though it would take another one hundred years for the latter to be invented.

22. Costas Lapavitsas, *Profiting without Producing: How Finance Exploits Us All* (New York: Verso, 2014), p. 4.

23. For a telling account of the dangerous move from defined pensions to those connected to the stock market, see business journalist Helaine Olsen, *Pound Foolish: Exposing the Dark Side of the Personal Finance Industry* (New York: Penguin Books, 2012).

24. Brassier, "Afterword: Speculative Autopsy."

25. I am evoking Nietzsche on the relationship between the idea of debt and guilt in *On the Genealogy of Morals*, trans. Walter Kauffman (New York: Vintage Books, 1967).

26. Cooper, *Life as Surplus: Biotechnology and Capitalism in the Neoliberal Era* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2008), p. 43.

27. This is frequently the place where critics of Deleuze and Guattari's process-oriented ontology claim that the latter are theorists of neoliberalism. However, this is a profound mischaracterization of their thinking. Deleuze and Guattari have an extended diagnosis of capitalism as consisting of dynamic, open systems that consistently change, and hence they think agency as dynamic and open. Moreover, they show that humans are machines or complex processes—not to instrumentalize humans, but rather to document the moving elements and forces that create humans, including their interaction with the world. Their arguments explain why humanist and Marxist arguments based on human dignity and stable notions of the human have not worked effectively. They are arguing for new forms of agency to resist such formations of agency.

28. Polanyi, *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time*, 2nd ed. (Boston: Beacon Press, 2001), p. 3. Please note that my reading of Polyani is willfully eccentric. Subsequence citations appear in text.

29. Meillassoux, "Iteration, Reiteration, Repetition: A Speculative Analysis of the Meaningless Sign," in *Genealogies of Speculation: Materialism and Subjectivity since Structuralism*, ed. Armen Avanessian and Suhail Malik (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), p. 120.

30. As Neil Irwin describes, "It was, according to a wide range of data, a lost decade for American workers. The decade began in a moment of triumphalism—there was a current of thought among economists in 1999 that recessions were a thing of the past. By the end, there were two, bookends to a debt-driven expansion that was neither robust nor sustainable. There has been zero net job creation since December 1999. No previous decade going back to the 1940s had job growth of less than 20 percent. Economic output rose at its slowest rate of any decade since the 1930s as well. Middle-income households made less in 2008, when adjusted for inflation, than they did in 1999—and the number is sure to have declined further during a difficult 2009. The Aughts were the first decade of falling median incomes since figures were first compiled in the 1960s. And the net worth of American households—the value of their houses, retirement funds, and other assets minus debts—has also declined when adjusted for inflation, compared with sharp gains in every previous decade since data were initially collected in the 1950s." "Aughts Were a Lost Decade for US Economy, Workers," *Washington Post*, 2 January 2010; http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/01/01/AR2010010101196.html.

31. In making this claim, I draw attention to Ian Baucom's *Specters of the Atlantic: Finance Capital, Slavery, and the Philosophy of History* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2005) as a guide. Although the book is focused on the eighteenth century and the status of slaves, Baucom writes an ontology of the present. He describes the murderous actions of the captain of the slave ship *Zong* as a galvanizing event for resistance among abolitionists and inchoate human-rights discourse, but also uses the tragedy to discuss the status of humans within financial capital.

4: Human Rights and States of Emergency: Humanitarians and Governmentality

1. Peter Sloterdijk and G. M. von der Haegen, "Instant Democracy: The Pneumatic Parliament," in *Making Things Public: Atmospheres of Democracy*, ed. Bruno Latour and P. Weibel (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2005), p. 952. The book accompanied the 2005 exhibition of the same title at the ZKM, Center for Art and Media, Karlsruhe. The article by Sloterdijk and

von der Haegen is cited in text hereafter as "Pneumatic Parliament." For representations of the Pneumatic Parliament, see http://www.g-i-o.com/pp5.htm.

2. The nation-state and state have always had a mutually co-implicating relationship, a point I've discussed with respect to Polyani and Foucault. I contend that the state–private sector partnership, the material expression of often differential multiplicities, transforms at specific moments in time, with either state or economic actors in the dominating position, but each presupposes the other.

3. David Kennedy, *The Dark Sides of Virtue: Reassessing International Humanitarianism* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2004), p. 16.

4. Supiot, *Homo Juridicus: On the Anthropological Function of the Law*, trans. Saskia Brown (New York: Verso Books, 2007), p. 193. Hereafter cited in text.

5. Gayatri Spivak challenges sole consideration of the legal context of rights, and recenters politics due to the importance of pedagogy for thinking rights differently. Rights, for Spivak, indicate a legal mechanism that we cannot not want in the final analysis, but one that facilitates "class apartheid" if trafficked in purely moralizing terms. The legal fiction of rights as coterminous with responsibility and justice leads to their instrumentalization through a neocolonial educational "consciousness raising" of the subalterns into rights discourse. For Spivak, the very question of natural rights must avoid its inalienable call to nature, unleashing a tradition that facilitates the social Darwinist "burden of the fittest," the obligation to bring ever larger sectors of the world under the umbrella of rights, offering "natural" emancipation through paternalist legality while evacuating power relations. Furthermore, rights are not merely rehearsed Euro-American conceits, but are also exercised by the developing world's elites, who share the same developmental discourses as global institutions but in local dialects. For this reason Spivak emphasizes the political function of thinking responsibility and the seemingly devalued concept of wrongs outside mechanisms of legal equivalence, as well as awareness of unthought or unrecognized knowledges that are drowned out by the chorus of global prescriptions. Spivak, "Use and Abuse of Human Rights," *boundary 2* 32, no. 1 (Spring 2005): 132–89.

6. Baxi, *The Future of Human Rights* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 130.

7. Asad, *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), p. 158.

8. See Mark Sanders's important book on South African *ubuntu*, the principle of reciprocity, during the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Ubuntu offers a different sense of humanity. Such arguments are imperative to bear in mind before proclaiming the posthuman, which may unwittingly

reassert the very Western privilege and centrism it seeks to undermine. Sanders, *Ambiguities of Witnessing: Law and Literature in the Time of a Truth Commission* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007).

9. Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, trans. George Schwab (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), p. 54. Originally published in 1932. Cited hereafter in text.

10. Schmitt was a passionate defender of the particularist positions of the German Reich, which led to his embrace of dictatorships as a way to protect sovereignty and the rule of law, and to his critique of the inefficiencies of parliamentary democracy. Schmitt identified the problematics of parliamentary democracy in its inability to act decisively, a crucial paradox of institutional politics: "The essence of liberalism is negotiation, a cautious half measure, in the hope that the definitive dispute, the decisive bloody battle, can be transformed into a parliamentary debate and permit the decision to be suspended forever in an everlasting discussion. Dictatorship is the opposite of discussion." Carl Schmitt, *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*, trans. George Schwab (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1985), p. 63. Parliamentary democracy is stifling for Schmitt because it manages through the endless deferral involved in discussion. Consequently, discussion is an effective management technique for dispersing power throughout fluid networks of relations that are seemingly manifest only in the final decision after the purported discussion, when the sovereign is reasserted through judgment. Schmitt's *Political Theology* is cited hereafter in text.

11. It is for this reason that in *Theory of the Partisan* Schmitt described the Spanish Civil War as a war of "national liberation" against "global communism." He describes the enemy of the human as terrorists—in this instance, Communists or the stateless attacking the sovereignty of Franco's Spain—who warrant annihilation. The similarity between this discourse and the Bush administration's justification for the war on terror shows the extent to which neoconservatives in the United States share Schmitt's idolatry of sovereignty and disdain for liberalism. Schmitt, *Theory of the Partisan: Intermediate Commentary on the Concept of the Political*, trans. G. L. Ulmen (Candor, N.Y.: Telos Press, 2007).

12. There was no need to declare formal states of emergency in the Nazi seizure of power, because sovereign mechanisms were used to justify the rise to power of Hitler and the Nazi Party.

13. Foucault, "*Society Must Be Defended*": *Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975–1976*, trans. David Macey (New York: Picador, 2003), pp. 254–56.

14. Brown, *Walled States, Waning Sovereignty* (New York: Zone Books, 2010), p. 23.

15. Kennedy, *Dark Sides of Virtue*, p. 294.

16. Kennedy, *Of War and Law* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2006).

17. Although technically controlled by human operators, often halfway around the world, drones legally inoculate their operators because it is the machine that actually does the killing. See P.W. Singer, *Wired for War: The Robotics Revolution and Conflict in the 21st Century* (New York: Penguin Books, 2009).

18. Singer, *Corporate Warriors: The Rise of the Privatized Military Industry* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2003).

19. Major General Charles J. Dunlap Jr., "Lawfare Today: A Perspective," *Yale Journal of International Affairs* 3, no. 1 (Winter 2008): 146–154; Dunlap, "Law and Military Interventions: Preserving Humanitarian Values in Twenty-First Century Conflicts," Harvard University, Kennedy School of Government, Carr Center for Human Rights Policy Working Paper, 2001, http://people.duke.edu/~pfeaver/dunlap.pdf.

20. Byers, *War Law: Understanding International Law and Armed Conflict* (New York: Grove Press, 2005).

21. Feher, *Powerless by Design: The Age of the International Community* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2000).

22. Rieff, *A Bed for the Night: Humanitarianism in Crisis* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2002), p. 15. Cited hereafter in text.

23. Michael Barnett, *Empire of Humanity: A History of Humanitarianism* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2011).

24. Michael Barnet and Thomas G. Weiss, *Humanitarianism Contested: Where Angels Fear to Tread* (New York: Routledge, 2011). Cited hereafter in text.

25. Agier, quoted in Zygmunt Bauman, *Liquid Times: Living in an Age of Uncertainty* (New York: Polity, 2006), p. 40.

26. Polman, *The Crisis Caravan: What's Wrong with Humanitarian Aid?* (New York: Picador Book, 2011); Alex DeWaal, *Famine Crimes: Politics and the Disaster Relief Industry in Africa* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009).

27. In 2001, six or seven NGOs controlled half of the entire worldwide budget for humanitarian work. The majority of the $6 billion spent in humanitarian aid comes from Western European countries, with only 12 percent coming from non-Western countries. Saudi Arabia is the largest non-Western donor (Barnet and Weiss, *Humanitarianism Contested*). Drawing from Elizabeth Ferris's article "Le dispositif mondial d'aide humanitaire: Une opportunité pour les ONG?" in *Revue des Migrations Forcée* no. 29 (January 2008), Michel Agier claims that "a dozen or so NGOs mobilize 90 percent of total funds for humanitarian NGOs, and a small number of these have budgets larger than that of the UNHCR itself." Agier, *Managing the Undesirables: Refu-*

gee Camps and Humanitarian Government, trans. David Fernbach (London: Polity Books, 2011), p. 203. *Managing the Undesirables* is hereafter cited in text.

28. Polman notes that one of the effects of the compression of the news organizations is that global humanitarian organizations frequently will pay journalists, recognizing them as one wing of their public relations, in order to generate more donations for the organization. Similarly, numerous commentators have focused on the felt need to portray the people of Africa as pure victims and in the process infantilize them as incapable of self-governance, and as thereby needing help from the benevolent and ethical in rich developed nations.

29. Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998).

5. translating rights: the international criminal court, translation, and the human status

1. Human Rights Watch, "The International Criminal Court Trial of Thomas Lubanga," 23 January 2009, http://www.hrw.org/news/2009/01/22/international-criminal-court-trial-thomas-lubanga.

2. International Criminal Court. "About," https://www.icc-cpi.int/about.

3. Stephanis Hanson, "Africa and the International Criminal Court," *Council on Foreign Relations*, 24 July 2008, http://www.cfr.org/africa/africa-international-criminal-court/p12 048.

4. Daniel Heller-Roazen notes that in ancient Rome, the human was a category for all noncitizens, including slaves and women, and thus for all nonjuridical subjects, a point lost in post-Enlightenment thought. See *Enemy of All: Piracy and the Law of Nations* (New York: Zone Books, 2009).

5. Michael Byers, *War Law: Understanding International Law and Armed Conflict* (New York: Grove Press, 2005).

6. Cochran, *Twilight of the Literary: Figures of Thought in the Age of Print* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2001), pp. 256–57. Hereafter cited in text.

7. Slaughter, *Human Rights, Inc.: The World Novel, Narrative Form, and International Law* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2007), p. 17. Hereafter cited in text.

8. See Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage, 1993), and Gauri Viswanathan, *Masks of Conquest: Literary Study and British Rule in India* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989).

9. Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), especially the chapters "Apparatus of Capture" and "Treatise on Nomadology: The War Machine."

10. Heller-Roazen, *Enemy of All*.

11. Rancière, "Who Is the Subject of the Rights of Man?" in *Dissensus: On Politics and Aesthetics*, trans. Steven Corcoran (London: Continuum, 2010), pp. 67, 68.

12. See for example Latour, *The Politics of Nature: How to Bring the Sciences into Democracy* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004), and Nietzsche, "On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense," *The Birth of Tragedy and Other Writings*, trans. Ronald Speirs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

13. Such issues are brought to the fore by adherents of the law and literature movement, who foreground the role of language and narrative in the law and that acts of reading and writing are the daily production of institutions including the law. In *Staging the Trials of Modernism: Testimony and the British Modern Literary Consciousness* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017), Dale Barleben analyzes the relationship of spectacle and porous representation to legal positivism in the very legal techniques of intent and precedent within British jurisprudence and British Modern writers. Jurisprudence connects law and life: "In effect, the words we invoke to describe life become part of the very fibre of life itself; the law as an act of speech is, then, like life itself, circular and self-referential. Given the law's reliance on precedent, tempered by its mandate to change as society changes, its study depends upon exchanges not just within the legal world, but also in the world at large" (p. 7). Similarly, Mark Sanders's important analyses of the "ambiguities of witnessing" draws attention to the contingent nature of law, testimony, memory, translation, and the formations of truth within the context of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in post-apartheid South Africa. In *Ambiguities of Witnessing: Law and Literature in the Time of a Truth Commission (*Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), Sanders foregrounds the ambiguity of testimony for creating indeterminacy at the level of truth and fiction. This leads to ambiguity even in the very possibility of verification, a point similar to Cochran's thoughts on modernity itself. Giving a hearing to previously unexpressed horrors and atrocities not only allows for new concepts of experience, if not reconciliation, but also shows how indeterminate and unverifiable testimony can be: "Because it must open to the unverifiable, and thus to ambiguities of witnessing, the law, in particular instantiations, makes possible the testimony that, in some instances, questions and transforms what it had set out to accomplish" (8). Hence while Sanders is highly critical of the TRC, he still sees that it helped to establish "responsibility-in-complicity" for the apartheid regime and those who unthinkingly benefited from it. "Responsibility-in-complicity" gestures toward new possibilities of justice, politicization, and law.

14. Sanders, *Ambiguities of Witnessing*, p. 9.

15. Kikono, Lingala, Swahili, and Tshiluba were in fact standardized by missionaries and commercial interests in order to serve as regional *lingua francae* for communicating with the country's polyphonic and multilinguistic peoples. "Democratic Republic of Congo," *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*, http://www.ethnologue.com/show_country.asp?name=CD.

16. Mahmood Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and Genocide in Rwanda* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).

17. See for example International Criminal Court (hereafter ICC), *Prosecutor v. Thomas Lubango Dyilo*, "Decision on the Manner of Questioning Witnesses by the Legal Representatives of Victims," ICC-01/04-01/0--2127, 16 September 2009, http://www.worldcourts.com/icc/eng/decisions/2009.09.16_Prosecutor_v_Lubanga.pdf.

18. Ngũgi wa Thiongo, *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature* (New York: Heinemann, 1986), p. 13.

19. Ibid., p. 29.

20. Griffiths, quoted in Anna Schecter, "Playing the Race Card at War Crimes Trials," ABC News, 27 October 2009, http://abcnews.go.com/Blotter/defendant-calls-international-criminal-court-racist/story?id=8921725&page=2#.UIhNCMXR6nk.

21. For example, Slobodan Milosevic's defense during his war crimes trial before the International Criminal Tribunal of the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY), a precursor to the ICC, challenged the jurisdiction of the Court. Milosevic's defense claimed that the ethnic genocide of Bosnian Serbs was an internal national/cultural matter, and thus, able to be solved without the intervention of international legal institutions. The latter, it was claimed, were violating national sovereignty by trying Milosevic. See BBC News, "Milosevic Trial: What Now for the Balkans?" http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/talking_point/1403458.stm, and United Nations General Assembly, 67th session, "Report of the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia," A/67/214-S/2012/592, 1 August 2012, http://www.icty.org/x/file/About/Reports%20and%20Publications/AnnualReports/annual_report_2012_en.pdf.

22. ICC, *Prosecutor v. Thomas Lubango Dyilo*, "Decision on Sentence Pursuant to Article 76 of the Statute," ICC-01/04–01/06-2901, 10 July 2015, https://www.icc-cpi.int/Pages/record.aspx?docNo=ICC-01/04-01/06-2901.

23. Steiner, *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 47. (Italics in original.)

24. Ibid., p. xii.

25. Benjamin, "The Task of the Translator," in *Illuminations*, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1976), p. 71.

26. Sakai, *Translation and Subjectivity: On "Japan" and Cultural Nationalism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997).

27. Apter, *The Translation Zone: A New Comparative Literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), p. 6.

28. Alice J. Baker, "A Model Statute to Provide Foreign-Language Interpreters in the Ohio Courts," *University of Toledo Law Review* 30, no. 4 (Summer 1999): 593; Roxana Cardenas, "'You Don't Have to Hear, Just Interpret!': How Ethnocentrism in the California Courts Impedes Equal Access to the Courts for Spanish Speakers," *Court Review* 38, no. 3 (2001): 24–31; Lynn Davis et al., "The Changing Face of Justice: A Survey of Recent Cases Involving Courtroom Interpretation," *Harvard Latino Law Review* 7 (Spring 2004): 1–25; Eric Eckes, "The Incompetency of Courts and Legislatures: Addressing Linguistically Deprived Deaf Defendants," *University of Cincinnati Law Review* 75, no. 4: (Summer 2007): 1649; Llewellyn Gibbons and Charles M. Grabau, "Protecting the Rights of Linguistic Minorities: Challenges to Court Interpretation," *New England Law Review* 30, no. 2 (1996): 227–334.

29. See Berg-Seligson, *The Bilingual Courtroom: Court Interpreters in the Judicial Process* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002); Sandra Hale, *The Discourse of Court Interpreting* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2004); and Gerald R. McMenamin, *Forensic Linguistics: Advances in Forensic Stylistics* (Hoboken, N.J.: CRC Publications, 2002).

30. Joshua Karton, "Lost in Translation: International Criminal Tribunals and the Legal Implications of Interpreted Testimony," *Vanderbilt Journal of Transnational Law* 41, no.1 (2008): 24. Karton is borrowing heavily from Richard Cole and Laura Maslow-Armand, "The Role of Counsel and the Courts in Addressing Foreign Language and Cultural Barriers at Different Stages of a Criminal Proceeding," *Western New England Law Review* 193 (1997).

31. Baker, "A Model Statute"; Cardenas, "'You Don't Have to Hear.'"

32. Karton, "Lost in Translation." Karton's study looks back at an extensive written record of the Nuremberg trials, articles about people's experiences, and memoirs related to the experience of translation and the inchoate international tribunal system. This is a luxury that we do not have with the ICC and the Lubanga trial, given that much of the key testimony of the sixty-seven witnesses took place behind closed doors, with many of the witnesses hidden to protect their identities for fear of possible retribution. We have access to some transcripts, daily accounts by the public charity and NGO Aegis Trust, such as Lubanga Chronicle #47, "Participating Victim: 'I Want to Take This Opportunity to Tell the World What Happened and Ask for Reparations,'" 13 January 2010, https://www.aegistrust.org/lubanga-chronicle-47-participating-victim-want-take-opportunity-tell-world-happened-ask-reparations. There was also recognition of translation problems in the March 23,

2012 final judgment in the case, and in *Prosecutor v. Thomas Lubango Dyilo*, "Decision on the Discrepancies between the French and English Transcripts and Other Related Matters," ICC-01/04-01/06-1974, 18 June 2009, https://www.icc-cpi.int/CourtRecords/CR2009_04635.PDF.

33. Ironically, given the institutional structure of the ICC and its establishment of translation policies, it should understand the situatedness and cultural specificity of its policies and laws, as most of them arise from Euro-American courts. The so-called universal right to translation stems from precedents set by the United Nation's Human Rights Commission, which itself relied on precedents established in specific member nation-states, overwhelmingly from precedents established in Europe. Consequently, precedents in powerful states and the interlocking state system create the institutional structure that determines what procedures and rules on translation in court are be observed. Cases such as *Harward v. Norway*, considered by the Human Rights Committee, established the basic rights of translation of documents for the accused (*Harward v. Norway*, Communication No. 451/1991, U.N. Doc. CCPR/C/51/D/451/1991 [1994]), and standards of interpreter competence were set in national jurisdictions and then appropriated by the ICC. After the 1998 Rome Statute, the ICC produced four separate articles regarding translation. Article 55 outlines the rights of person under investigation; Article 87 makes stipulations regarding cooperation from states under general provisions; and Article 100 announces that costs will be borne by the Court. Most pertinent to our discussion, however, is ICC Article 67, which outlines the rights of the accused: "To have, free of any cost, the assistance of a competent interpreter and such translations as are necessary to meet the requirements of fairness, if any of the proceedings of or documents presented to the Court are not in a language which the accused fully understands and speaks." The statement enshrines a fundamental right to translation as a principle of fairness for the trial and equality before the law, a right few nation-states promise to their citizens, let alone try to uphold. Furthermore, while the ICC picks up the cost of translation, finding translators to engage in the task before the trial phase is primarily left to the defense.

34. Sadie Blanchard, "Obligation of ECCC Regarding Document Translation for Defendants and Their Attorneys," http://www.d.dccam.org/Abouts/Intern/Sadie_Blanchard_Translation.pdf.

35. War Crimes Research Office, *Expediting Proceedings at the International Criminal Court*, Report 12 (June 2012), Washington College of Law, American University, http://cdm266901.cdmhost.com/cdm/ref/collection/p15029coll1/id/44.

36. The prosecution and defense in *ICC v. Lubanga* were united in raising translation concerns, given how important the final transcript would be for rendering the Court's decision, but they reified these concerns into ones of

utility. The court transcript objectified life into the written record. The sheer number of witnesses and the time lag between the initial testimonies of witnesses and their appearances in court created a situation whereby the transcript became the truth of the testimony itself, annihilating the temporal and affective concerns of language and nonverbal communication, lost in the translation to the transcript. Ironically, the final judgment of the case identified extensive inconsistencies between witnesses' previous testimonies, often taken *in situ* in the DRC, and that presented in court. In the final judgment many of the prosecutions' witness testimonies were discarded as specious. See for examples section VIII of the final judgement. ICC, *Prosecutor v. Thomas Lubanga Dyilo*, "Judgment Pursuant to Article 74 of the Statute," ICC-01/04-01/06, 14 March 2012, https://www.icc-cpi.int/CourtRecords/CR2012_03942.PDF. However, the issue of translation could only be thought in terms of the instrumentalized procedures for how to make translation more efficient for future cases brought before the ICC. The final transcript as court experience mediates and translates meaning and language before we even get to the issue of whether the transcript has been adequately translated in its initial unfolding.

37. The ICC claimed to be designing a "universal rights culture" by broadcasting the Lubanga trial in French from the courtroom to the DRC for "educational purposes." The broadcasts in French were touted as a vehicle to frustrate future mass killings and conscription of child soldiers in the region. Supposedly being schooled in universal justice will create new human rights subjects who will transcend the messy political and material realities of everyday life in the DRC. However, given the vast poverty of the population and a literacy level of 66.8 percent in any one of the four major languages (Kikono, Lingala, Swahili, and Tshiluba), those versed in the governmental language were most likely hard to come by throughout the DRC. See Adam Hothschild, "The Trials of Thomas Lubanga," *The Atlantic*, December 2009, http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2009/12/the-trial-of-thomas-lubanga/7762/. The ICC's heuristic tools, which must simultaneously ensure that justice will be served and advocate for the relevance, fairness, and justness of the Court, may be lost in translation due to the privileging of a language that only a minority of educated elites in the Democratic Republic of Congo speak. See "Democratic Republic of Congo," *Ethnologue*.

38. Sakai, *Translation and Subjectivity*, p. 13. (Italics in original.)

39. War Crimes Research Office, *Expediting Proceedings*, p. 60.

40. Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 109.

6. speculative fictions and other cartographies of life

1. Shteyngart, *Super Sad True Love Story* (New York: Random House, 2010), p. 66. Hereafter cited in text.

2. Foucault in a brilliant reading of Kant's "What Is Enlightenment?" outlines another critical tradition: "This other critical tradition does not pose the question of the condition of possibility of a true knowledge: it asks the question: What is present reality? What is the present field of our experiences? Here it is not a question of the analytic of truth but involves what could be called an ontology of the present, of present reality, an ontology of modernity, an ontology of ourselves." *The Government of Self and Others: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1982–1983*, trans. Graham Burchell (New York: Picador, 2011), pp. 20–21.

3. Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987). Hereafter cited in text.

4. For Deleuze and Guattari, machinic enslavement is not all bad, for it shows the ways in which we can think molecularly and use the very tools of our enslavement for momentary liberation. It also speaks to their own post-anthropocentric critique. Guattari first proposed the premise of machinic enslavement that became so central to Deleuze and Guattari's thinking.

5. Guattari, *The Machinic Unconscious: Essays in Schizoanalysis*, trans. Taylor Adkins (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2011), p. 27.

6. Deleuze, *Essays Critical and Clinical*, trans. Daniel W. Smith and Michael Del Greco (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), p. lv. Hereafter cited in text as *Essays*.

7. "A language seems to be defined by the syntactical, semantic, phonological constraints in its statements; the collective assemblage, on the contrary, concerns the usage of these constraints in relation to variables internal to enunciation itself (variables of expression, immanent acts, or incorporeal transformations)" (Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 85).

8. It is for this reason that Guattari describes how machines have existential qualities that are not the machinic automation or enslavement of a totalizing structure, but a mapping of lines of force, a cartographics of the emergence into existence. Enunciations at their eruption do not have meaning, or they have leakage and escape through actions that could lead to alternatives.

9. Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), p. xvii.

10. Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 1.

11. See Crary, *24/7: Late Capitalism and the Ends of Sleep* (New York: Verso Books, 2014).

12. *Homo oeconomicus* is, for Foucault, "a grid of intelligibility," "someone who pursues his own interest, and whose interest is such it converges spontaneously with the interest of others. From the point of view of a theory of government, *homo oeconomicus* is the person who must be left alone." *The*

Birth of Biopolitics, trans. Graham Burchell (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010), p. 270. The "economic human" views freedom primarily as a market concern and embodies emergent synergies between differing political constituencies of the Left and Right who are united by their hatred of the state's rules and regulations, and by their desires for security. With Foucault's "economic humanity," power shifts the government-economy relationship and creates new subject formations. In other words, *homo oeconomicus* represents a type of humanity and agency organized by and for the economy.

13. To his credit, Shteyngart makes Lenny incapable of understanding his present reality because he spends too much time looking for answers in books, many with heroic characters who follow certain noble if patriarchal and anachronistic values, such as chivalry, that are incongruous for a present that turns everything into a medium of exchange.

14. Galloway, *Protocol: How Control Exists after Decentralization* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2004).

15. Thomas H. Davenport, *The Attention Economy: Understanding the New Currency* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard Business Review Press, 2002).

16. Political philosopher Jacques Rancière recognizes Foucault's philosophical coimplication of political and aesthetic realms and extends this idea through his concept of the "distribution of the sensible." Rancière's "distribution of the sensible" names a process of sensing, perceiving, judging, and acting in the world that marks the limit and establishes the hierarchy of the possible, including subject and group formation, and highlights affective relations. This comprises processes that are sensed, perceived, felt, and affected, as well as subjects who are rendered mute because their language defies comprehension within the distribution of the sensible, such as the critics of a neoliberal consensus. For Rancière, the social reality that we are obliged to consent to is an effect of political motivations of normalized consensus, so that the social order is delimited within a small range of ways of being, living, sensing, perceiving, and speaking. For Rancière, sense-perception and the ways in which a human might recognize its surroundings become the real itself, whereby figures become the very realm of sense, knowledge, and truth. See *The Politics of Aesthetics: The Distribution of the Sensible*, trans. Gabriel Rockhill (New York: Continuum, 2004).

17. Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace, 1973), and *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (New York: Penguin Books, 1997).

18. Naomi Klein, *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism* (New York: Picador Books, 2008).

19. This argument resonates with Sherry Turkle's in *Alone Together: Why We Expect More from Technology and Less from Each Other* (New York: Basic Books, 2012).

7. BETWEEN WORDS, NUMBERS, AND THINGS: TRANSGENICS AND OTHER OBJECTS OF LIFE IN MARGARET ATWOOD'S MADDADDAM TRILOGY

1. Atwood, *Oryx and Crake* (New York: Anchor Books, 2003); *The Year of the Flood* (New York: Anchor Books, 2009); *MaddAddam: A Novel* (New York: Anchor Books, 2013). Hereafter cited in text as *Oryx*; *Flood*; and *MaddAddam*.

2. Kurzweil takes the term *singularity* from Vernor Vinge to describe the point at which artificial intelligence will trigger technological expansion that can limitlessly improve minds and bodies. Kurzweil, who now works for Google's research division, believes that the human mind will eventually be quantifiable, thus allowing for machinic intelligence equal if not superior to that of humans. Furthermore, the techno-human interface will allow people to live longer, as the organic body will no longer be a limit, as minds will be downloaded onto mainframes. The obvious effects this would have on the organization of society are rarely addressed by Kurzweil, except as future marketing possibilities for ever-newer technologies. Indeed, while it is not the subject of this chapter, most of the hype surrounding advances in biotechnology is in part a marketing tool to ensure further investment from the hedge funds, asset management firms, banks, and so forth, needed to bankroll these extremely expensive biotech and pharmaceutical companies. See Kurzweil, *The Singularity is Near: When Humans Transcend Biology* (New York: Viking Books, 2005).

3. Timothy Morton's *Ecology Without Nature: Rethinking Environmental Aesthetics* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007) is essential reading in this regard for his argument to save ecology from nature, colonized as it is by Romantic ideas. I believe Atwood is making the same claim.

4. In this regard, I am rehearsing Adorno and Horkheimer's critique of the instrumentalism of culture: The means for freedom are also those for enslavement. See their *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. Edward Jephcott (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007).

5. Rajan, *Biocapital: The Constitution of Postgenomic Life* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2006), and Rose, *The Politics of Life Itself: Biomedicine, Power, and Subjectivity in the Twenty-First Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007).

6. Cooper, *Life as Surplus: Biotechnology and Capitalism in the Neoliberal Era* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2008).

7. Wolfe, *What Is Posthumanism?* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009); Graham Harman, *The Quadruple Object* (Zero Press, 2011); Levi Bryant, *The Democracy of Objects* (Ann Arbor: Open Humanities Press, 2011); Ian Bogost, *Alien Phenomenology, or. What It's Like to Be a Thing* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012).

8. Atwood stated that she does not consider herself a writer of science fiction, but of speculative fiction, after a row with Ursula Le Guin over a review of her work: "What I mean by 'science fiction' is those books that descend from HG Wells's *The War of the Worlds*, which treats of an invasion by tentacled Martians shot to Earth in metal canisters—things that could not possibly happen—whereas, for me, 'speculative fiction' means plots that descend from Jules Verne's books about submarines and balloon travel and such—things that really could happen, but just hadn't completely happened when the authors wrote the books. I would place my own books in this second category: no Martians. Not because I don't like Martians, I hasten to add; they just don't fall within my skill set. Any seriously intended Martian by me would be a very clumsy Martian indeed." Atwood, "The Road to Ustopia," *The Guardian*, 14 October 2011, https://www.theguardian.com/books/2011/oct/14/margaret-atwood-road-to-ustopia.

9. "I'd been clipping small items from the back pages of newspapers for years, and noting with alarm that trends derided ten years ago as paranoid fantasies had become possibilities, then actualities." Atwood, "Writing *Oryx and Crake*," in *Writing with Intent: Essays, Reviews, Personal Prose, 1983–2005* (New York: Basic Books, 2006), p. 284.

10. Giovanni Arrighi, *Adam Smith in Beijing* (New York: Verso Books, 2009); Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World System* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1974).

11. Atwood, "Dire Cartographies: The Roads to Ustopia," in *In Other Worlds: SF and the Human Imagination* (New York: Knopf Doubleday, 2011), pp. 66, 74.

12. Atwood, "The Road to Ustopia.," *The Guardian*.

13. Spinoza, *The Ethics*, in *A Spinoza Reader: The Ethics and Other Works*, trans. Edwin Curley (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

14. Virginia Woolf, *Three Guineas* (San Diego: Harcourt and Brace, 1963).

15. Atwood, "Writing *Oryx and Crake*," p. 286.

16. J. Brooks Brouson, "'It's Game Over Forever': Atwood's Satiric Vision of a Bioengineered Posthuman Future in *Oryx and Crake*," *Journal of Commonwealth Literature* 39, no. 3 (September 2004): 139–56; "'We're Using Up the Earth. It's Almost Gone.': A Return to a Post-Apocalyptic Future in Margaret Atwood's *In the Year of the Flood*," *Journal of Commonwealth Literature* 46, no. 1 (April 2011): 9–26.

17. Kass, *Human Cloning and Human Dignity: The Report of the President's Council on Bioethics* (New York: PublicAffairs Books, 2002), and "The Wisdom of Repugnance," *New Republic* 216, issue 22 (2 June 1997).

18. For more on this, see note 16 in chapter 6.

19. Cooper, "Turbulent Worlds: Financial Markets and Environmental Crisis," *Theory, Culture, and Society* 27, no. 2–3 (May 2010): 167.

20. Ibid., pp. 173–74.

21. For more on this, see chapter 3.

22. Cooper emphasizes therefore that financial derivatives have taken on the status of money. They are the only medium of exchange and contractual connection of relational value, now that fixed exchange rates and control over national currencies have been abolished. The leverageable event recognizes the inability to grasp fully the entire complexity of the system and the contingent and dynamic forces that are perpetually connecting with other forces, objects, ideas, and concepts. See Melinda Cooper, *Life as Surplus*. It is for this reason that derivatives model for subjectivity as other categories melt into air.

23. See Martha Nussbaum and Cass Sunstein, eds., *Clones and Clones: Facts and Fantasies about Human Cloning* (New York: Norton, 1999), for the 1997 report and debates on cloning from evolutionary biologists, lawyers, sociologists, and theologians.

24. Catherine Waldby traces the disaggregation of the body to be monetized or rendered into capital through blood, tissues, organs, and stem cell lines as fungible units of exchange, causing a need to rethink bodily integrity as a natural limit for profit seeking. See *Tissue Economies: Blood, Organs and Cell Lines in Late Capitalism* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2006).

25. Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1969).

26. Alexander Galloway, *Protocol: How Control Exists after Decentralization* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2004).

27. Stiegler, *Taking Care of Youth and the Generations*, trans. Stephen Barker (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010).

28. While undoubtedly Bogost is correct about gamification's noncritical function, he exhibits an unrecognized discourse of authenticity. He laments the appropriation of games and leisure activity by businesses that have blurred the boundaries between work and leisure by using game activities in the workplace. In his argument, they thereby denigrate the "art" of games, which for him is *de facto* critical. See his "Gamification Is Bullshit: My Position Statement at the Wharton Gamification Symposium," 11 August 2011, http://www.bogost.com/blog/gamification_is_bullshit.shtml, and his "Persuasive Games: Exploitationware," *Gamasutra*, 3 May 2011, http://www.gamasutra.com/view/feature/6366/persuasive_games_exploitationware.php.

29. Galloway, *Gaming: Essays on Algorithmic Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006).

30. In this point, I am evoking Foucault's discussion of state racism in "*Society Must Be Defended*": *Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975–1976*, trans. David Macey (New York: Picador, 2004) as a mode of governmentality for making live and letting die certain forms of life. With sovereignty transformed through flexible mechanisms of power, and power operating through both modes of individualization (disciplines) and massifying (the species), the primary unit of governance normalizes the population and the species, what Foucault calls biopower. Racism enters into this mix as a way to establish hierarchies within the continuum of life.

31. Jimmy tried to remember less commonly used words and deploy them in novel syntax, thus remaking the language, treating the words "as if they were children abandoned in the woods and it was his duty to rescue them" (*Oryx*, 195).

32. Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (New York: Penguin Books, 2009), p. 307.

33. The desire for universal communicability can be seen in I. A. Richards's Basic English goals and the development of Esperanto, as well as in the more recent efforts of Jurgen Habermas in his work on universal pragmatics, particularly in his theory of communicative action. The rise of English as the *lingua franca* of the global market might also be considered in this light.

34. Jimmy's father has an assistant on the pigoon project at OrganInc Farms named Ramona, who will eventually become his stepmother after his biological mother runs away to join the God's Gardeners. Ramona exemplifies the numbers person: "Ramona was supposed to be a tech genius, but she talked like a shower-gel babe in an ad. She wasn't stupid, said Jimmy's dad, she just didn't want to put her neuron power into long sentences. There were a lot of people like that at OrganInc, and not all of them were women" (*Oryx*, 25).

35. The operative text for this issue is Friedrich Nietzsche's "On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense," in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, eds. Vincent Leitch et al. (New York: Norton, 2010). For an analysis of Nietzsche and the production of the human, see Terry Cochran, *Twilight of the Literary: Figures of Thought in the Age of Print* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2001).

36. Manuel DeLanda, *War in the Age of Intelligent Machines* (New York: Zone Books, 1994).

37. Wilson, *Sociobiology: The New Synthesis* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1975).

38. Stephen J. Gould, "Sociobiology: The Art of Storytelling," *The New Scientist* 80 (18 November 1978): 1229; Lewontin, *Biology as Ideology: The Doctrine of DNA* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1994); Alcock, *The Triumph of Sociobiology (*New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

39. Morton, *Ecology without Nature*, p. 77.

40. In this regard, Atwood enacts Mary Shelley's Victor Frankenstein trope of the scientist who goes too far in pursuit of a universal vision and ironically puts himself in a potentially God-like position through the world he makes, while denying the element of faith and belief that gods have inspired. In making this comment, I am not advocating a position or articulating the need to return to a theological worldview, but discussing a trend caused by loss of belief in the world, the idea of hope, and the material possibilities of changing the world. Belief gets captured around limited tasks created by conducted forms of attention, whether the fetish of cutting government spending, as exemplified by the Tea Party, or seeking empowerment and agency through virtual success in MMORPGs, to generate something for disaffected individuals to believe in. Stiegler describes the loss of reason as hope leading to a dual sense of expecting nothing and fearing nothing as society disintegrates, and disaffected individuals are produced by the very society that is unraveling, due to a loss of trust in it. See his *Uncontrollable Societies of Disaffected individuals*, trans. Daniel Ross (New York: Polity Press, 2013).

41. Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994).

42. Simondon, "Genesis of the Individual," in *Incorporations*, ed. Sanford Kwinter and Jonathan Crary (New York: Zone Books, 1992), p. 300.

43. According to Elizabeth Grosz, Darwin reconceives life as perpetual becoming: "The movement of evolution is in principle unpredictable, in principle historical, in the sense that the nature of the species in the past prefigures and provides the raw material for present and future species but in no way contains, limits, or directs them to any particular goal or destination. The sciences that study evolution—evolutionary biology and genetics, for example (and in spite of their aspirations)—become irremediably linked to the unpredicatable, the nondeterministic, the movement of virtuality rather than the predictable regularity of the actual, the transmission of qualities and aptitudes rather than clearly measurable and predictable links that other sciences have tended to seek." *Time Travels: Feminism, Nature, Power* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2005), p. 38. Grosz's Deleuzian Darwin describes how Darwinian evolution mixes stability and becoming through connections in a host of contexts.

44. Shostack, *Becoming Immortal: Combining Cloning and Stem-Cell Therapy* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002).

45. Hayflick's limit was actually a refutation of Alexis Carrel's belief that all cells were immortal. Using empirical evidence, Hayflick determined that the average cell divided forty to sixty times before it went into a state of senescence. For more information, see Shostack, *Becoming Immortal*. Melinda

Cooper's "Resuscitations: Stem Cells and the Crisis of Old Age," *Body and Society* 12, no.1 (2006): 1–23, first drew my attention to this issue.

46. Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2010), p. 85.

47. Shostack, *Becoming Immortal*, p. 28.

8. Reification of the Human: Global Organ Harvesting and Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*

1. Kazuo Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* (New York: Vintage Books, 2005). Hereafter cited in text as *Never*.

2. See Michael Denning, "Wageless Life," *New Left Review* 66 (November-December 2010): 79–97, and Zygmunt Bauman, *Collateral Damage: Social Inequalities in a Global Age* (New York: Polity Books, 2011).

3. Karl Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts*, trans. Martin Milligan (Amherst, N.Y.: Prometheus Books, 1988). Marx also deals with this central issue in terms of the alienation of labor, fetishism of the commodity, and his humanist defense of the species being, in *Capital*, vol. 1, trans. Ben Fowkes (New York: Vintage Books, 1974). György Lukács, "Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat," *History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1972).

4. Nussbaum, *Frontiers of Justice: Disability, Nationality, Species Membership* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2006).

5. Rachel Carroll, in her article "Imitations of Life: Cloning, Heterosexuality and the Human in Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*," *Journal of Gender Studies* 19, no. 1 (March 2010), argues that Ishiguro stages the normalization of heteronormative codes of existence in the training of the clones to "pass" and replicate heternormative couples, while they are denied the ability to procreate. For Carroll, "Kathy and her peers have been unknowingly schooled in assimilation; they are taught to 'pass' as normals within a culture which exploits them. I would suggest that [Ishiguro's] imitative motif serves less to reveal the inauthenticity of the cloned subjects than to demonstrate the performative and reiterative nature of normative heterosexuality" (65). While I agree with Carroll on the role of othering and the policing of the human within heternormative codes, her argument neglects the function of the body as simultaneously defining the clones as organ donors and as objects of sexual pleasure, irrespective of their being denied a procreative function. They have been engineered to be sterile, so they are generally left to their own devices with respect to their affective and libidinal formation. Their only instruction is to avoid mixing with "normal humans." The Guardians even suggest, paradoxically, that the students may have a more healthy relationship with their bodies and with sex than "normals" who kill each other over sex. This technique solidifies the passing of clones as humans who

will ghettoize themselves from the "normals" and define themselves purely as body-things, while indicating that affective love is both desirable and elusive (they will have to figure it out for themselves). In the process, the very *bildung* of their interiority (including affective relations) is elusive without their bodies, rendering the Cartesian dualism of interiority and exteriority untenable, because their bodies are the realization of their minds/intelligence.

6. Bernard Stiegler's notion of the epiphenomenon of memory through technology is relevant here. See his *Technics and Time 1: The Fault of Epimetheus*, trans. Richard Beardsworth (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988).

7. See Shaheem Black, "Ishiguro's Inhuman Aesthetics," *Modern Fiction Studies* 55, no. 4 (Winter 2009): 785–807. In one instance, an older student, Ruth, wants to donate her collection to a charity organization, and seeks the counsel of a handyman attending to the clones while they are at the Cottages, where students live after finishing their educations. The handyman scoffs at her collection, saying that no one would want it. These items have affective value for her, but do not have fungible, market value, even in the world of donated, used goods. They are junk twice over (*Never*, 131).

8. Black, "Ishiguro's Inhuman Aesthetics."

9. Berardi, *The Soul at Work: From Alienation to Autonomy* (New York: Semiotext(e), 2009), p. 200.

10. See Eatough, "The Time that Remains: Organ Donation, Temporal Duration, and Bildung in Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*," *Literature and Medicine* 29, no. 1 (Spring 2011): 153.

11. Ibid.

12. I am extending Black's discussion in "Ishiguro's Inhuman Aesthetics" into the market, to show that rather than positing an inhuman aesthetics, Ishiguro considers how empathy can be exploited even while offering the altruistic idea of humanizing.

13. It would be easy to read Miss Emily and Madame as similarly victims within this philanthropic system. The two characters not only lose Hailsham, but must also continue to pay off debts arising from the humanitarian school's demise, long after the governmental and corporate funding has ceased. Nevertheless, Miss Emily and Madame reveal to Tommy and Kathy how repulsed they were at some basic level by the clones' technohuman existence, and the women loathed touching them (referenced repeatedly in the text), indicating that there were certain limits to their empathy. Indeed, in these final scenes, Miss Emily sees herself as a victim who did all this hard work for these creatures that still make her flesh crawl, even years later, and received nothing in return except debts. That is why she can be so callous to them.

14. Here I am drawing on the copious literature on the disparities between the global North and South and the global discrepancies in wealth and technology. It is important to point out that this geographic distinction is

merely a form of convenience, as the "global South" can serves as a metaphor for spaces of poverty and economic dispossession that can appear within nations of exceptional wealth.

15. My primary goal with this example is to emphasize the whimsy of the market-based philanthropic system, a ubiquitous presence in our neoliberal and financial present. Once "the wind changes," neither state nor market donors can afford the luxury of treating the subhuman clones as anything more than the useful compendium of organs they are. The group of donors would have admittedly always been a small number of "natural humans" who may have felt a sting of conscience, but why would companies, wealthy individuals, and the government, through grants, donate money? They must have collectively believed in the Hailsham model, or saw it as *au courant* and fashionable; otherwise, the funds would not have been forthcoming, notwithstanding the fact that Hailsham and the other humanitarian clone farms were run on the cheap. As a real-world corollary of this example, demonstrating the importance to people of short-term commitments when the cause is fashionable or under the media's glare, think of all the money donated for disaster relief (hurricanes, floods, fires) in the United States to help fellow citizens. People willingly give money at these times, but these very same people will fight tooth and nail against any increase in their tax burden. For companies, philanthropic donations are sound business practice. Their donations are driven by the impetus of the philanthropic tax write-off, coupled with the branding possibilities offered by corporate philanthropy and the opportunity to appear in the media as good corporate citizens that care for communities struck by disaster. These very same companies spend considerable monies in lobbying for low tax rates and fewer regulations that might add to their costs. Ishiguro's timeline of the 1970s and the change in climate Miss Emily refers to could also be read as a metaphorical indictment of Thatcherism and the ascendance of neoliberalism as a dominant mode of governance. Thatcherism dispensed with the idea of society and focused only on individuals in the market, and in the process, as I have shown, rendered more and more people expendable, not unlike the clones.

16. See Franco Berardi, *The Soul at Work: From Alienation to Autonomy*. Also see Melinda Cooper's important *Life as Surplus: Biotechnology and Capitalism in the Neoliberal Era* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2006).

17. Hannah Arendt argued that the loss of politicization in the transformation of the nation-state's sovereignty denied general legal protections to more and more sectors of the population. As a result, humans had to fall back on their natural rights, the rights they have as creatures of reason, often without any governmental force to enforce or protect those rights. See her *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace, 1973).

18. Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. H. J. Paton (New York: Harper Perennial Torchbooks, 1964).

19. Waldby and Mitchell, *Tissue Economies: Blood, Organs, and Cell Lines in Late Capitalism (*Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2006), p. 187.

20. David Matas and David Kilgour, *Bloody Harvest: The Killing of Falun Gong for Their Organs* (Woodstock, Ont.: Seraphim Editions, 2009). Matas and Kilgour are both human rights lawyers, and the text is constructed as evidence for a case and for the passage of legislation.

21. See for example Harry de Quetteville and Malcolm Moore, "Serb Prisoners 'Were Stripped of Their Organs in Kosovo War,'" *The Telegraph*, 11 April 11, 2008.

22. Ian Black, "Doctor Admits Israeli Pathologists Harvested Organs Without Consent," *The Guardian*, 21 December 2009.

23. Dan Bilesky, "Black Market for Body Parts Spreads Among the Poor in Europe," *New York Times*, 28 June 2012, http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/29/world/europe/black-market-for-body-parts-spreads-in-europe.html?mcubz=0.

24. Scheper-Hughes, "The Last Commodity: Post-Human Ethics and the Global Traffic in 'Fresh' Organs," in *Global Assemblages: Technology, Politics, and Ethics as Anthropological Problems*, ed. Aihwa Ong and Stephen Collier (New York: Basil Blackwell, 2004), pp. 143–67.

25. Scott Carney, *The Red Market: On the Trail of the World's Organ Brokers, Bone Thieves, Blood Farmers, and Child Traffickers* (New York: William Morrow, 2011).

26. For a list of transplant tourism services in operation circa 2007, see Yosuke Shimanono, "The State of the International Organ Trade: A Provisional Picture Based on Integration of Available Information," *Bulletin of the World Health Organization* 85, no. 12 (December 2007): 955–62, http://www.who.int/bulletin/volumes/85/12/06-039370-table-T1.html .

27. See IndUShealth's website, at http://www.indushealth.com.

28. Carney, *The Red Market*, p. 78.

29. Richard Titmuss, *The Gift Relationship: From Human Blood to Social Policy*, original edition with new chapters (New York: The New Press, 1997); originally published in 1970 by Allen and Unwin, London. It could be argued that Titmuss's logic of the gift was a critical guide for Ishiguro while crafting *Never Let Me Go*.

30. Titmuss, *Gift Relationship*, p. 6.

31. Leslie Sharp shows the problems with the alignment of the altruistic system with individual rights of privacy. She describes the idea of "biosentimentality" that emerges between the organ donors' families and recipients, who are often frustrated by the privacy laws enacted by the medical community. See *Strange Harvest: Organ Transplants, Denatured Bodies, and the Transformed Self* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2007).

32. For examples of these market arguments, see Scheper-Hughes, "The Last Commodity," and Carney, *Red Market*.

33. Waldby and Mitchell, *Tissue Economies*.

34. Rabinow, *French DNA: Trouble in Purgatory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), p. 95

35. Bardini, *Junkware* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011).

36. The term *junk DNA* is quite controversial, for it explains little about the actual operation of DNA as an encoding machine. DNA that does not transcribe or code was initially considered "junk" for failing to carry out what was seen as its primary use. Later, scientists wondered if a different type of coding was in fact taking place that did not register within the same utilitarian categories.

37. See Jeremy Rifkin, *The Biotech Century: Harnessing the Gene and Remaking the World* (New York: Tarcher, 1999), for a popular account of corporate ownership of the elements of life through patent law.

38. See Waldby and Mitchell, *Tissue Economies*.

39. Bruno Latour, "From Realpolitik to Dingpolitik—An Introduction to Making Things Public," in *Making Things Public: Atmospheres of Democracy*, eds. Bruno Latour and Peter Weibel (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2005).

40. I could just as easily discuss Deleuze and Guattari's "body without organs," but given what I am addressing, their metaphorics might be dismissed and attacked due to moral repugnance at the literal meaning of the phrase. See *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. See also Bruno Latour, *The Politics of Nature: How to Bring the Sciences into Democracy* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004).

41. Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History," in *Illuminations*, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1967), p. 257.

CONCLUSION. AHUMANS: A GUIDE TO NONMARKET LIVING

1. We can see this directly in the focus on human capital, a concept popularized by neoliberalist thinkers; in the pervasive use of faith-based organizations for humanitarian aid within the borders of the United States, for the homeless, prisoners, and, frighteningly, for healthcare; in the refocusing of higher education from the acquisition of general knowledge to the acquisition of marketable skills; and in the shift in public commitment to excellent education from public schools to private-public partnerships, as seen in the rise of charter schools and voucher programs. Both Democratic and Republican administrations in the United States have supported these changes in education-related policies, but now they are directed by Betsey DeVos, Trump's Secretary of Education. A possible crisis looms with regard to financial aid for higher education, given the likelihood that it will eventu-

ally be further privatized through the transformation of student aid programs based on block grants to help the underserved finance college education, to reliance on student loans that can never be discharged through declarations of bankruptcy. Student loans from private lenders have variable interest rates, dependent upon the income, assets, and credit ratings of individual students and their families, which in effect retrenches existing social and familial inequality, and thus the poor exist as debt. Education has long been billed as the engine of social mobility, but since the Reagan administration in the 1980s, those who can turn themselves into assets through education and training have a valued existence, while others can be rendered expendable, and student loans can be a gatekeeper. Which students can pay off their loans, and what did they major in?

2. Conor Dougherty, "How Noncompete Clauses Keep Workers Locked In," Business Day, *New York Times*. 9 June 2017, https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/13/business/noncompete-clauses.html.

3. *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*, ed. Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon, Peter Gordon (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), p. 103.

4. Polyani, *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2001); Immanuel Wallerstein, *Historical Capitalism and Capitalist Civilization*, 3rd ed. (New York: Verso, 2011); Giovanni Arrighi, *The Long Twentieth Century: Money, Power and the Origins of Our Time* (New York: Verso, 1993); Arrighi, *Adam Smith in Beijing: Lineages of the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Verso, 2009).

5. Arguments about the politics of intersectional subjectivity often fall into discourses of authenticity, the fragmentation of subjectivities that are designed to be representative, and then endless deliberation on who can speak for whom, or marking of the most oppressed group of beings as providing the key to salvation for oppressed peoples everywhere. Or the argument is made that the proliferation of performative significations of identity frustrates power instead of perhaps becoming a new stream of cultural capital. While I am not discounting this work, the overcoming of barriers of identity is exactly how capital works, as Marx outlined in the *Grundrisse*; this line of though neglects to consider how humans function transactionally, like money. Such realities are important to consider in light of arguments for intersectionality now dominating the political scene. To do the work of intersectionality may also put these different constituencies in competition with one another. When constituencies cannot imagine creating alliances for fear of losing revenue streams, as I discussed with regard to humanitarianism and disaster capitalism, power can divide and conquer.

6. See Hardt and Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000); Castells, *The Rise of the Network Society* (New York: Basil Blackwell, 1996).

7. Simon Head, *Mindless: Why Smarter Machines are Making Dumber Humans* (New York: Basic Books, 2014), p. 7.

8. For a doomsday scenario version of this that offers much food for thought, albeit in a more alarmist and deterministic tone than I believe is warranted, see Martin Ford, *Rise of the Robots: Technology and the Threat of a Jobless Future* (New York: Basic Books, 2015).

9. Diane Ravitch, *Reign of Error: The Hoax of the Privatization Movement and the Danger to America's Public Schools* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 2013).

10. See the Local Initiatives Support Corporation, a nonprofit helping neighbors to build communities through flexible and innovative mechanisms responsive to neighborhoods, http://www.lisc.org/docs/events/031015_bonds_blackboards_agenda.pdf.

11. Alan Singer wrote for the *Huffington Post*:

> Obscure laws can have a very big impact on social policy, including obscure changes in the United States federal tax code. The 2001 Consolidated Appropriations Act, passed by Congress and signed into law by President Bill Clinton, included provisions from the Community Renewal Tax Relief Act of 2000. The law provided tax incentives for seven years to businesses that locate and hire residents in economically depressed urban and rural areas. The tax credits were reauthorized for 2008–2009, 2010–2011, and 2012–2013.
>
> As a result of this change to the tax code, banks and equity funds that invest in charter schools in underserved areas can take advantage of a very generous tax credit. They are permitted to combine this tax credit with other tax breaks while they also collect interest on any money they lend out. According to one analyst, the credit allows them to double the money they invested in seven years. Another interesting side note is that foreign investors who put a minimum of $500,000 in charter school companies are eligible to purchase immigration visas for themselves and family members under a federal program called EB-5.

Singer, "Why Hedge Funds Love Charter Schools," *Huffington Post*. 20 April 2014, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/alan-singer/why-hedge-funds-love-char_b_5357486.html.

12. Democrats for Education Reform is not affiliated with the Democratic Party, though Obama and Arne Duncan have been closely linked to the organization. For more information, see Ravitch, *Reign of Error*; and Zephyr Teachout and Mohammed Khan, "Corruption in Education: Hedge Funds

and the Takeover of New York's Schools," Washington Park Project, 2 December 2015, https://greatschoolwars.files.wordpress.com/2014/12/corruption_ in_education.pdf.

13. Eggers's text seems to draw considerably from Eric Schmidt and Jared Cohen, T*he Digital Age: Transforming Nations, Businesses, and Our Lives* (New York: Vintage Books, 2014). Schmidt is one of the co-founders of Google, and Jared Cohen worked in the U.S. Department of State Policy Planning Unit. Eggers's *The Circle* seems to offer a speculative projection of their analysis if brought to fruition.

14. Rushkoff, *Throwing Rocks at the Google Bus: How Growth Became the Enemy of Prosperity* (New York: Penguin, 2916).

15. J. Paul Narkunas, "Capital Flows through English: Market English, Biopower, and the World Bank," *Theoria: A Journal of Social and Political Theory* 108 (December 2005): 28–55.

16. The 2008 economic crisis confirmed what other crises in 1870, 1890, 1907, 1929, 1973, 1987, 1989, 2000, and so forth have brought to the fore in the U.S. context: the public assumes the risk and uncertainty of private enterprise in moments of crisis, but in "stable" moments profits are kept privatized.

17. Compare with Terry Cochran: "Despite assertions of veiled or critical thought, thinking never takes place in pristine seclusion, separate from the figures of thought that necessarily channel it. No matter how developed an individual's critical awareness, thinking remains marked by institutional power, by the conditions that render it possible and by the interpretations that demarcate the tolerated limits of divergence. In effect, by definition critical thinking results from the struggle to detach thought from the means of thinking: that is, it is the sediment from the effort to think the figures of thought." *Twilight of the Literary: Figures of Thought in the Age of Print* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2009), p. 254.

18. Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?* trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), p. 93. Hereafter cited in text. Earlier in the same book, they note, "Figures have nothing to do with resemblance or rhetoric but are the condition under which the arts produce affects of stone and metal, of strings and wind, of line and color, on a plane of composition of a universe" (p. 66).

19. Deleuze and Guattari describe the relationship and yet distinction between conceptual personae and figuration: "The difference between conceptual personae and aesthetic figures consists first of all in this: the former are the powers of concepts, and the latter are the powers of affects and percepts. The former take effect on a plane of immanence that is an image of Thought-Being (noumenon), and the later take effect on a plane of composition as image of a Universe (phenomenon)" (ibid., p. 65). This is not to say

that there is no memory or that there are no habits of thought. Indeed, the habits of thought construct the very idea of the subject and the individual, and hence are the easiest mechanisms, as Foucault would describe, for controlling human possibilities to create new modes of life and being.

20. In *Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution* (Brooklyn: Zone Books, 2015), Brown is very critical of Foucault's lack of a formulation about the political due to his focus on sovereignty and politics. Foucault never animated a political animal in his analysis of governmentality and the subject and power, I think, because of the ease with which the political animal can be captured by power. For Foucault, the human is not a privileged site of politics; instead, he focuses on modes of politicization that operate like Simondon's modes of individuation, depending on the situational agglomeration of relations, which I have been calling ahuman.

21. The organizers in Washington seemed to have had a full line of speeches; they tried to organize the expression of collectivity into a diversity festival of speeches and performances, even by celebrities, that went on for five hours. At a certain point, people simply started marching, because the attacks on Trump, and the speeches on difference, on people of color, the poor, the dispossessed, and so forth—the intersectional alliance—all started to sound the same.

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